







A  
**LETTER**  
TO AN  
**ENGLISH NOBLEMAN,**  
RESPECTFULLY  
SUBMITTED TO THE SERIOUS  
CONSIDERATION

HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT.

CONTAINING  
**An Analysis of the British Constitution,**  
AND  
A REVIEW OF THE  
**CATHOLIC QUESTION,**  
AS IT RELATES  
TO IRELAND IN PARTICULAR,  
AND AS IT STANDS CONNECTED IN ITS CONSEQUENCES WITH THE  
HAPPINESS AND SECURITY OF SOCIETY IN  
OTHER COUNTRIES.

*By LIBERATOR.*

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Fiat justitia ruat Cælum.

CICERO.

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TO THE  
RIGHT HONOURABLE  
HENRY - RICHARD,  
*LORD HOLLAND.*

MY LORD,

IF the principles of policy on which you have hitherto acted rose no higher than the humble level of sect or party, your support and advocacy of the present address would not be solicited.

Its matter, not its composition, claims, and I trust will receive, your candid and impartial investigation. I will neither insult your reason nor violate my own feelings with the unmeaning and obsequious phraseology of modern dedication, but will anticipate, from a

Nobleman the near relative of an enlightened and virtuous Statesman, whose memory will live whilst liberty is dear to man, that degree of co-operation which is consistent with the true interests of the British Constitution.

# A LETTER,

8c. 8c.

MY LORD,

IF ever the period arrived in which national union would produce national strength, and obedience to the laws rational and enlightened freedom, the present moment is that peculiar æra, and would be the auspicious season for its completion. We live in an age when infancy may be said to partake of manhood, and the experience of centuries to have been compressed within the limits of a few revolving years. How infinite our advantages! How great our correspondent duties!

The necessity of elementary discussion, (*in limine*) will, I trust, after some reflection, appear to your Lordship obvious and indispensable.

In the analysis of material nature, we follow the order of our restricted faculties, from effect to cause, in the wonderful works of creation and of providence; until we come to that Great Cause, whose existence we must and ought joyfully to acknowledge, but whose essence we presumptuously and in vain endeavour to comprehend.

Despairing, therefore, to gain an elevation to which we dare not attempt to soar, we are, at length, impelled to the review of social combinations, as coming within the legitimate boundaries of imperfect man.

And here it may not be irrelevant to remark, that we neither can or ought to expect abstract perfection. The condition of humanity must ever be imperfect—ever subject to alloy. Terms, when applied to social institutions, must be comparative only; and the regulations of one state or country can only then be considered as politically excellent, when examined and compared with those of another—keeping steadily in view this truth; viz. that the depositaries of power and the objects of it are respectively liable to error and to crime, and partake of the inherent and acquired properties of our common nature.

Let me, therefore, under these restrictions, direct your Lordship's attention to the investigation of such original rights as are not surrendered by man on entering into the social state, and to the enjoyment of ~~which every~~ <sup>which every</sup> member of the community (not stained by crime or rendered infamous by punishment) is, under the British Constitution, equally and fully entitled.

I will next request your Lordship's attention to the nature and spirit of the Constitution, previous to and at the period of the Revolution of

1688. And I will, lastly, direct your attention to a review of the conditions to be performed by every candidate for the honours and privileges of the State, previous to his competency to hold or to enjoy them. And having stated what those conditions are, and their universal application, I will endeavour to prove that such conditions cannot be injurious or repugnant to the *letter* or the *spirit* of the Christian Religion.

As the first part of this address is nearly axiomatic, it will be only necessary briefly to state such facts as it will be impossible to disprove.

Original rights are three-fold,—viz. those of Life, Liberty, and Property—efficient and paramount, whether in the savage or social state. Force may suspend, and tyranny for a season withhold them, and extort from their victims a reluctant and precarious submission; but neither can alter the essence of natural or moral principle—neither can create or originate.

Such blessings as these may well be denominated “original rights.” And their possession acquires an increased value, from the peculiarity by which they are secured and perpetuated, either unknown or envied by surrounding nations: for where are institutions to be sought, which, like ours, are founded on a deep conviction of human guilt and imperfection; that stems the torrent of the passions by penalty

or controul; and diminishes the sphere of their action, by realizing and securing those rights which man is entitled to possess and ought to be qualified to enjoy—rights founded on the broad basis of intuitive and moral principles, declared and secured by legislative enactment, and rendered venerable by the awful but instructive progress of time?

Behold, then, a perfect charter of constitutional liberty — felt, though often unacknowledged. Without it, men are merely slaves—with it (unless guilty of moral suicide), they must be freemen.

*Practical*, not speculative, good claims our rational attachment. This the Constitution can amply bestow. Let it then be our high privilege, as it is our bounden duty, to rally around it — to guard it against open violence and insidious artifice. Let us remember, that whatever abuses may have partially disfigured it, yet that the Constitution is the common property of all, and that its benefits are fully sufficient to silence faction and to demand allegiance.

The second division of my subject now claims your Lordship's attention: What was the nature and spirit of the British Constitution, previous to and as declared and acted upon at the Revolution of 1688?—As I am fully justified in stating, that the principles of the Constitution were from the earliest ages impartial and comprehensive,

though gradually operative and efficient, I must protest, in the first instance, against an idea, that has been much indulged in and entertained, that the Constitution was not moulded or formed until the memorable æra of the Revolution of 1688. I must have read little, and reflected less, if unable to discover that the Settlement at the Revolution only declared what the Constitution really was — displaying its energies, consummating the wisdom and experience of time, and transmitting the results of grave deliberation and enlightened patriotism to successive ages.

And here it is not necessary to give a more extended detail of the changes, which the Constitution experienced in the different periods of our instructive history, than what is sufficient to prove *that* one principle (often no doubt suspended, but never extinguished) pervaded the policy and gradually cemented the fabric of the British Constitution; viz. “an identity of rights with a capability of privileges.” And if we reflect on the wisdom of our Saxon ancestors, as evinced in the person of the immortal Alfred, whose deep and impressive knowledge of man and his nature are evinced in our first and best institutions, we will perceive the application of this principle, *by power being conferred as a duty to be performed, not as a privilege to be enjoyed*; and that “original rights” (to which I before adverted) were the subject-matter upon which their simple but



direct legislation then acted, in order to perpetuate and secure them.

Enlightened wisdom! worthy of those hardy sons of freedom, who knew no tyrant but the laws, or acknowledged no human power unsanctioned by or not derived from them!

But, if we reflect on the sad effects which the introduction of opposite principles produced with the Norman Conquest, we have still a more decided conviction of the wisdom and stability of the Saxon institutions, and of the principles upon which they rested, when power, aided by superstition, could only suspend, but never could obliterate or destroy them.

It is true, a sad but instructive duty devolves upon me, to depict the situation of these realms previous to the passing of Magna Charta—to pourtray, not in fiction, but with the imposing evidence of truth, the degraded John, the victim of unhallowed power, conveying, with all the solemnities of legal investiture, three kingdoms, together with the rights and privileges of his subjects, to the Legate of the Pope, as God's vicergerent, and accepting a re-conveyance, subject to annual payments, as his vassal and his subject! On this transaction, the text becomes the ablest commentary!

Power, at different periods of our history, has successively increased and diminished. In one period, constitutional liberty has flourished; at

another, decayed ; and again resumed its wonted vigour. Man, the slave of passion and of crime, has alternately appeared as her enemy and friend ; but at the period I have referred to, subsequent to the Norman Conquest, England received a taint inseparable from her condition. She contained among her inhabitants many who felt an interest in the state separate from the policy of those institutions which our Saxon ancestors had wisely established ; and though national jealousy at first successfully endeavoured to retain them, yet feudal principles were gradually introduced and acted upon, sufficient to admit the operation of arbitrary power, but not to perpetuate and confirm it.

Exertions not warranted by the Constitution, could only be legalized by superstition. “ Ignorance covered the earth, and dark ignorance the people.”

The contest between the Crown and the aristocracy began. The law was issued by the clergy—the people were its executioners, either as the blind instruments of the one, or as the vassals of the other. Yet even the clergy were sometimes converted into patriots. Whenever the rapacity of their spiritual head was visited upon themselves, then, indeed, the duties of submission and obedience to temporal power were enforced and inculcated ; but when the King considered the duties he was sworn to ob-

serve, and the rights of the people he had pledged himself to defend, as the especial objects of his care and patronage, then resistance to his authority was meritorious and indispensable, and zeal for the Church “the one thing needful\*.”

At this eventful crisis, Papal rapacity appeared in its true colours: Foreigners were appointed to all the rich benefices of the Church—claims unheard-of before were preferred and prosecuted by appeals to Rome—the nation’s treasure exhausted, the Pope’s coffers filled. The process was judicious: the mind became insensibly degraded—property precariously defended.

Then the Barons, the great proprietors of the soil, actuated by the principles of feudal independence, by which they could either controul their Sovereign or deride his menaces, rallied their adherents, and, advancing at their head, indignantly burst through those fetters that unrelenting tyranny would have imposed upon them. Then, at that eventful crisis, the recuperative energies of the Constitution were loudly proclaimed at Runnymede, by the passing of the Great Charter, in which, to guard against doubt or misconception, it was expressly stipulated and declared, that such Charter was no new grant, but only a confirmation of the ancient liberties of the people.

I will freely admit, that the consequences

\* Hume, vol. ii. pp. 246, 7; Rapin, vol. iv.

which the great Charter has produced must be ever dear to the patriot mind ; but, my Lord, it is more than questionable, whether the actors in this great drama could possibly be influenced by principles of enlightened freedom.

What was the state of the people at that period? Their rights suspended, but not destroyed; their faculties rendered torpid by bigotry, but not extinguished. The cry to arms was obeyed by their respective adherents, with the devotion that feudal policy inspired; identifying themselves with their chiefs, substituting feudal habits for Saxon principles.

• They were not roused to arms as freemen, indignant even at the attempt to violate that liberty which they then enjoyed, and would never surrender but with life. Alas! they could not contend for rights which they did not enjoy. How is it possible to conceive, that the sacred flame of Liberty could encircle their heads, whose bodies were subject to the caprice of one authority, and whose minds (the more valuable part) were shackled and oppressed by another? The Barons alone drew up this memorable Charter, and through popular instrumentality imposed it on their Sovereign.

The Charter consisted of two parts:—the first was such an explanation of the feudal law as was calculated to confirm privileges then enjoyed by the Barons, but not clearly ascertained and de-

fined: the latter contained such general articles as revived those laws which their Saxon ancestors had before enacted — laws which the Barons (though ignorant of the true principles of social policy) must have made, not only for their own security, but even for the benefit of those whose rights were not primarily attended to, in order to sanction and secure by compact what, if violated, could be maintained only by the sword.

The term “freeman” was used as a “*designatio personæ*,” in opposition to “villein”—as in the concluding clause, thus, “*nullus liber homo*,” &c. the words of the Charter—which, after deprecating the principle of arbitrary and excessive fines, and stating that every *freeman* should be fined or mulcted only in proportion to his offence, contains at the end of the clause these words, in the translation: “*Even a villein, or rustic, shall not by any fine be bereaved of his carts, ploughs, or instruments of husbandry.*”

Here, then, is a *classification* of persons, not an *equalization* of rights; and those who were thus deprived of them were the most oppressed, as they were by far the most numerous.

History, therefore, has been well defined by a noble writer, “philosophy teaching by examples\*.” Stripped of its false glare, every transaction which the historian of past ages records appears in its

\* Lord Bolingbroke’s Introduction to the Study of History.

real colours, and is impressive by its own weight. Passion has ceased to agitate, and crime moulders in the dust. Human nature appears to be the same, but susceptible, from extrinsic causes, of various modifications.

We discover from the history of man his real character. We view him, impelled by passion and seduced by interest, as the blind but unconscious founder of that liberty, which, though long suspended, could not be effaced or destroyed. But thanks to an overruling Providence, who converted the crimes of the respective combatants into the means by which this memorable Charter was effectuated, displaying to succeeding ages the Genius of the Constitution (containing within itself the seeds of its own regeneration) gradually animated, then revived, and at length starting forth in all the majesty of insulted greatness.

Inequality of rights has been charged as a recognized principle of the Constitution; but that such a charge should be made by those who enjoy *equal* rights, and are capable of acquiring, though they do not possess, *equal* privileges, is *naturally* to be expected, though not *justly* to be inferred.

Self-love, implanted in the mind for the wisest purposes, if well directed, is a noble incentive to virtuous and enlightened action; but if impelled by passion, debased by interest, or restrained by prejudice, (however specious or liberal profession

may possibly be,) becomes only a fit instrument to destroy what it vainly expected to obtain.

The necessity of recurring to the period of this memorable Charter, will appear, if you review the various legislative provisions, from this epoch inclusively, with impartiality and attention. Though the benefits, then, secured and declared by the great Charter, operated rather as privileges conferred on the few, than as rights belonging to the many; yet the principle of identity and capability (though previously existing) was then fixed and confirmed. *Freemen were few, but their rights were equal: slaves were numerous, but their jealousies were extinct.* I can, with you, my Lord, duly appreciate the benefits which this Charter confers; yet, I presume, neither your pride of ancestry nor sense of patriotism could be much gratified by tracing your pedigree to the stock from whence it originated.

In the reign of the First Edward, amidst the struggle of contending parties, this principle of identity of rights as connected with capability of privileges, was again recognized and established.

Legal and judicial proceedings were then better understood, and resolved into forms (with little variation) similar to those we all at present enjoy; and though the principle was then restricted, yet ~~w~~ with the abolition of feudal tyranny it became of general and extended application.

Liberty, as opposed to licentiousness, is of slow growth—striking deep her roots unnoticed and unobserved, while passion raged and tyranny subdued; which, like meteors, shone only with a temporary but pernicious light, and then vanished away—purifying, however, in their course our political atmosphere, and thus rendering it congenial to the cultivation of that blessing which all are anxious to enjoy, but few able to appreciate, as its rich harvest can only be gathered by patient toil and after much endurance.

The truth of these observations may be more apparent to your Lordship, by attending to some of the remaining enactments of the English Justinian, who, though not then undeserving of such an appellation, yet endeavoured, in some degree successfully, to reconcile things of an opposite nature—viz. his love of justice (as applicable to his subjects) with an extreme anxiety to exempt himself from its operation and controul. Eager to improve, and apprehensive of losing, the power he had acquired, he conceded or demanded according to the strength or weakness of the parties opposed to him: and though he was fully convinced that the power of the Barons was the great obstacle to an equal administration of the laws, which he was anxious his subjects should enjoy; yet, with an inconsistency which fear only could produce, a statute was then passed, entitled



the statute “Dedonis,” confirming that very power, by enabling the Barons to entail their respective properties in such a manner as not only to perpetuate but also to render them incapable of diminution.

It may be here objected, that as the Barons, in the preceding reigns of John and Henry, revived and confirmed those laws which their Saxon ancestors had before enacted, they would necessarily become their guardians, and not their violators. Perhaps most of the errors and crimes which have deformed man in every age, arose from a false estimate of his real composition.

The power which the Barons possessed previous to the passing of the Great Charter, was assailed by such unqualified despotism as to compel them to advocate those rights which they had long despised and insulted. Alarmed only for themselves, that love of dominion and controul, so inseparable from our corrupted nature, was veiled with the mask of spurious patriotism, which the ignorance of that age could neither penetrate or withdraw: they perfected in *theory* those liberties which a more auspicious æra was to reduce to practice.

But when, in the First Edward’s reign, this Charter was to be felt and enjoyed, as well as understood by its application and its use; then, indeed, that power, which the Barons were anxious to retain, must be preserved, if not by a

direct violation of the laws, at least by a virtual and indirect one—rendering their property, on which such power was founded, immovable and perpetual. Experience, however, proves incontestably man's weakness and presumption; as the very means adopted to uphold power, by perpetuating property, became subservient to its own destruction.

It has been justly observed, that “fortitude is the virtue of adversity\*”—applicable alike to nations as individuals; productive of that patience which enables man to investigate and to compare; to endure evils for a time, in order more effectually to combat and remove them—laying the foundations of political happiness in mutual controul, rather than in mere positive institution. Ephemeral and insecure must that nation be whose principles of government, though fixed and certain, have not “grown with its growth, and strengthen'd with its strength.” You may perceive, on a review of the succeeding reigns, though the feudal policy was partially retained, many causes conspiring to accelerate and increase the operation of that elementary principle of the Constitution; viz. an identity of rights with a capability of privileges.

Without adverting at present to the various statutes which were enacted to restrain Papal encroachments (as more directly belonging to

\* Bacon's Essays.

the last part of my subject), the beneficial variations which real property has undergone from Edward IV. to Henry VII. (inclusive) is decisive of the above principle, and deserves much consideration. Pursuing events, not anticipating them, our ancestors collected wisdom from experience; and perceiving that excess of power necessarily circumscribes and destroys itself, particularly on a soil where liberty, once planted, might be checked, but could not be extirpated, suffered its possessors to expend their force, and by so doing to become the unconscious instruments of their own depression.

Liberty, the legitimate offspring of equal laws, became dearer to man in proportion to the wrongs he endured and the privations he submitted to in order to obtain it.

Conscious as our ancestors were of the magnitude of the prize for which they contended, they *suffered* that they might *enjoy*.

The power of the Nobles continued, even to the reign of Henry VII., in no small degree to be formidable to the Crown and oppressive to the People.

Mutual security required mutual co-operation. The property of the Nobles, the pivot upon which their power turned, lost its essential qualities of perpetuity and identity: the statutes of fines and recoveries at once demolished entails, remainders, and reversions, with all their consequent

and inseparable evils opening new prospects of acquiring real property to industry and commercial enterprize; and thus evincing, that the rapacity of power can be restrained by the means employed to secure and confirm it\*

An objection may here be made, that any references to the remote periods of our history cannot disprove the policy of granting the honours and privileges of the Constitution to the various classes of its subjects, without restriction or previous qualification.

Enough, I trust, has been advanced to prove, that the genius and spirit of the Constitution is *impartial* and *comprehensive*; and when I more fully discuss (as proposed under the last part of my subject) the nature of those qualifications, equally obligatory on all, previous to the acquisition of power and privilege, such an assertion will receive still greater confirmation, and evince that, as "rights" were *equally* enjoyed, so also was power and privilege *equally* liable to restrictions. Yet these truths may pass through such perverted mediums, as to give them an appearance which prejudice *only* can entertain, but reason must *ever* condemn; and, therefore, let the negative description of it solve the objection. The Constitution is not a system of specious theory or brilliant experiment. It has not the charms of novelty to recommend it. Neither temporising

\* Hume's England, vol. iv. p. 152.

nor accommodating, though it extends equal protection to all, it confers power and distinction on none but on those who conform to its rules and submit to its provisions.

But if this negative description is not sufficient, perhaps it may be better to describe what it truly *is*—its *principle* and its *character*. “It is a system of human controul, guarded by mutual jealousy, and secured by a consciousness of mutual imperfection.” Its votaries must comply with its requisitions. It is most *valuable* when most *maligned*. It dictates, but will submit to *no* dictation.

And really, my Lord, had not the Constitution which equally protects us, and which we are all entitled to enjoy, been deeply laid in sufferance and privations, it would have long since experienced the fate of other nations, which waded through seas of blood, from licentiousness to despotism. Let us then pursue its eventful history; and, learning wisdom from experience, let us check shallow presumption, forego temporizing expedient, and rest only on the broad basis of well-founded hope and rational expectation. The reign of the Seventh Henry is peculiar and impressive; for in consequence of the change which property (as I before stated) had experienced, and the loss of influence which the lords, the descendants of the ~~ancient~~ barons, felt as a necessary consequence, the People, identified with the Crown, recovered

their rights. Time effected what presumption would have endangered.

The native force of our mixed form of government may be discovered by comparison, better than by analysis. In France, about the same period, the reigning tyrant only gained. The nobles there were then peculiar sufferers. The clergy retained their possessions; but the people (as if generically different) submitted to a state of relaxed, but regulated slavery, capable of increase, but incapable of extinction.

In England, the true principles of policy began gradually to unfold. Crime, the means by which power was hitherto acquired and retained, became less formidable, as its deformity was more discoverable. Man added increased reflection to the essential qualities of forbearance and moderation—abhorrent of slavery, watching with patriot zeal over the embers of liberty, and awaiting the auspicious moment to kindle and enliven them: and though power appeared more desirable, as its existence became more precarious, yet its possessors were compelled to vary the means by which they expected to retain it. The empire of the laws began to extend, their benefits to be felt, and their sovereignty acknowledged. Political health became discernible: the arts of peace were cultivated; the nature of civil and domestic policy rendered more intelligible. England enjoyed, during this reign, tranquillity at home and

security against foreign aggressions. We may justly consider the conclusion of this reign as forming a peculiar era in the eventful history of our country. War ceased to be our sole profession. Peace was cultivated ; and in its progress excited fresh hopes, and stimulated to new enterprise. Commerce produced confidence, and literature excited inquiry. Man's faculties were put in motion, and every exertion became an assurance of renewed strength.

Thus far, my Lord, I have related with fidelity if not with force, the rise and progress of that liberty which *all* are entitled to possess\*, but Freemen *alone* qualified to enjoy: and, although in most of the succeeding reigns, until that of the unhappy Charles, liberty may appear to be retrograde, and almost obscured; yet it received such vigour from intermediate controul, and force from compression, as at length produced an explosion, which power, betrayed by flattery, and unaided

\* The discovery of the Western World by Columbus, and the passage opened to the East Indies some years afterwards, under the auspices and command of Vasques de Gama, by the Cape of Good Hope, are events as brilliant as they were essential to the improvement of civilization ; and if to these we add another memorable event which happened during this reign, viz. the taking of Constantinople by the Turks, (in addition to the benefits which the Crusades previously and unintentionally produced), we will be possessed both of the cause and the means by which man was first roused from torpor, and at length enabled to discover and unfold the hidden treasures of his comprehensive mind.

by opinion, did not duly anticipate, and could not ultimately prevent.

Yet even in the reign of the Eighth Henry, though Parliaments became the registrars of the Crown, and confirmed the propensities of its will—though prerogative was direct and obedience implicit; yet even then, it was directed rather against those who would diminish its force, by controuling its power, than against the people, whose comparative situation rendered competition then as hopeless as it would be impolitic.

But here we may discover the peculiar character of the British Constitution, always supplying either the means of *resistance* or the powers of *endurance*: for though no human institution can prevent the ebullition of intoxicated power, yet it would in vain be exercised, had not the people, in the preceding reign, obtained security against feudal oppressions, by the introduction of wise and salutary laws, which were considered then as an equivalent counterpoise for the occasional extension of prerogative above law, by those who, wearied with national discord, and still writhing under the effects of intestine tumults, (then happily subsided) preferred positive right with precarious enjoyment, to the desperate remedy of procuring redress by violence; which, if unsuccessful, would only confirm the authority it was intended to destroy\*.

\* Hume's History of England, vol. iv. p. 118, ster. ed. 1810.



At that period, the people could separate the temporary abuse of power from its systematic recognition ; and though the operation of some laws might be partially suspended, and their provisions rendered abortive by passion adding impulse to authority, yet the objects to be obtained by power were distinct from, but not inconsistent with, that respect to the habits and sentiments of the people, (acquired by descent from those early institutions which wisdom produced, and experience rendered dear and invaluable,) which preserved them from such visitations of authority as could so far impeach their rights as to deprive them of the future possibility of constitutional remonstrance.

Under arbitrary governments, where power is founded on opinion—not restrained by principle or defined by law—authority increases in the ratio of man's debasement. It becomes uncontrouled exactly as reason is subdued, and prejudice increased. In such a state, every act of power adds weight to authority, as remonstrance would be criminal and slavery meritorious ; but in a state where power has been so far restrained, by the demarcation of those rights which were not only anterior to the existence of that authority which might meditate to destroy them, but had often received its sanction and confirmation,—that in such a state, liberty could be for ever prostrate, and its impression entirely effaced, would be as

morally impossible as the contemplation of such an event must be degrading and repugnant.

It is true, liberty might for a certain period be obscured and oppressed, but would, with the removal of the pressure, recover its wonted elasticity; and, regarding liberty not only as a natural propensity, but in these realms as man's peculiar birthright, I may well assert, in the language of the Roman Poet, whose delineation of the human character is stamped with the united testimonies of two thousand years,

"Naturam si expellas furca tamen ipsa recurret\*."

During this reign much was effected for the sober pencil of history to describe, and unimpassioned philosophy to contemplate and review. Though the advantages that accrued to the people in the preceding reign were as decisive as they were equal and impartial, yet they were not the effects of choice, but the productions of an imperious necessity.

What was required to raise the executive power above aristocratic dependence and controul, equally elevated the people above the permanent oppressions of either. Force might controul, or power might extort temporary sacrifices, but liberty became an active principle, either supported by prerogative or increased by resistance, whenever prerogative was systematically exerted to destroy it.

\* Horace.

We may discover in the person of the Eighth Henry all the claims of the contending houses of York and Lancaster fully united: besides, the personal qualities of the young prince, contrasted with the austere demeanour and debased economy of his predecessor, gave to national hope the early promise of fancied prosperity and increasing virtue. Hence the facilities with which power was exercised, and the effects which its undivided operation produced and perfected: hence we perceive the depraved passions of a sovereign become the instruments of national prosperity, rescuing *ultimately* the mind from bondage, and *instantly* the land from plunder; confirming those principles of liberty, (which at a more congenial season were to produce their corresponding fruits), by the exercise of a prerogative which its possessor vainly imagined at all times, and under all circumstances, would have been permanent and irresistible.

How clearly must we here perceive, and how explicitly ought we to confess the influence of a wise and controuling Providence, which renders the faculties of a depraved and impetuous nature (without violating the freedom of moral agency) subservient to the high purposes of his unerring will!

The reigns of Elizabeth and James, until we arrive at the reign of Charles the First, and from thence to the Revolution, are sufficient to prove

that this principle of identity and capability before mentioned, in all the fluctuations of power and resistance, may be recognized and discovered as inseparable from the Constitution, however modified; and that the intermediate and preceding reigns, together with those we have discussed or may yet discuss, so far as they refer to Papal encroachments, are applicable to the third part of this subject.

In reviewing the reign of Elizabeth, we perceive the effects of that bold and daring policy which marked her father's reign, preparing the public mind for those essential alterations which her wise and liberal policy matured and confirmed. In one reign, great events were produced by the exercise of prerogative, stimulated to exertion by passion and caprice: in the other, we can behold a sovereign actuated by motives commensurate with the magnitude of the objects proposed to be attained. We can discover in the former the exercise of power, regardless of consequences, directed solely to the acquisition of its object, yet productive of benefits which the impulse of mere animal passion could not possibly anticipate: in the latter we perceive prerogative, though not formally, yet in fact rallied on the side of freedom, raising up a people, and crushing the expiring efforts of feudal aristocracy.

It is true, instances may be adduced of the exercise of prerogative not exactly conformable to

the received opinions of constitutional equity; but let it be distinctly understood, that influence might afterwards effect what power, raised on popular confidence, then achieved; and, as a proof that the real independence of her people was not invaded, their property (previously subjected to feudal exaction) was neither demanded by the sovereign, not taxed by parliamentary enactment, farther than the policy of a protecting government actually required. We view the wisdom of combined counsel, connected with unity of design and promptitude of action.

Not satisfied with profession, but proving its sincerity by its fruits, we gaze on the august spectacle of a patriot Queen requiring from the depositaries of her confidence all the energies of head and heart. No shallow artifice or mean expedient could endure the ordeal of her sagacious and comprehensive mind.

Convinced, as she truly was, that national glory must neither be supported at the risque of national credit nor of individual security, she considered office as a laborious duty to be performed, not as a splendid but oppressive pageant to be conferred.

Equally sparing of honours as frugal of the nation's wealth, public services in her estimation seldom merited national distinctions.

She was fully sensible *that nobility of mind should be evinced previous to the ceremonies by*

*which, as its supposed symbols, they were to decorate and distinguish the person.* Hence principle became true policy; and zeal, united with talent and fidelity, the highest recommendation.

Influenced by such motives in the choice and continuance of her advisers, we can easily account for the success of her measures and the happiness of her people.

Though liberty was not the vulgar theme of a desolating democracy, it was, however, practically enjoyed. Power, united with security, neither provoked to resistance nor submitted to licentiousness. The foundations of liberty were then silently but securely extending, under the influence of decided yet protecting prerogative, which, by not invading the sacred limits of individual security, gave permanence and consistency to that liberty, which, though not expressly acknowledged, was afterwards effectually achieved.

Conscious that the sources of authority are only explored when power is converted into oppression, Elizabeth wisely erected it on the solid basis of national prosperity; and not vainly proclaiming her title to indefinite authority, she was satisfied with its undisturbed possession. Devoid of apprehension for its safety, she reigned unrivalled in the hearts and affections of a grateful and happy people.

Whether we reflect on the extent of her conceptions, or the ability with which they were realized—the wisdom of her laws—the imminent

perils that threatened the country she so wisely governed and bravely defended — or the more insidious machinations of internal foes, by whom she was surrounded, for having successfully levelled “spiritual wickedness in high places;—” whether we reflect on the sagacity by which plots were discovered, or the vigour by which they were defeated—whether we contemplate her generous aid, extended to a brave and suffering nation, struggling with patriot ardour to escape from the fangs of a remorseless despotism, and by her assistance realizing their most sanguine expectations \*;—whether we consider her as the dispenser of equal justice, or as the scourge of hypocrisy—the records of this reign must be as imperishable as their effects were glorious and incalculable.

During the auspicious period I have imperfectly attempted to pourtray, we have seen prerogative moving in its appropriate sphere,—inspiring general confidence by extending equal protection; affording neither pretext for resistance nor impunity to disobedience;—but the reign of James the First, to which we are now arrived, exhibits a weak and vicious contrast.

We are, however, plainly and practically taught by it this humiliating lesson, *that inherent and acquired corruption is increased by prejudice and confirmed by power.*

Trained up from his infancy in the pernicious

\* Hume's England, vol. vi. p. 109. Ster. ed. Lon, 1810.

but subtle refinements of Scholastic Divinity, and impressed with notions of authority congenial to an imperfect and corrupt nature, he eagerly adopted opinions, *as true*, which his passions, leagued against his reason, would never permit him to examine.

Educated by courtiers, but not by friends, he considered himself most elevated when he was most degraded. Unacquainted with the first principles of human knowledge, whilst ignorant of himself he vainly imagined that to him the duties of instruction and legislation peculiarly belonged. Yet, though his mind was poisoned by his preceptors, and deluded by his flatterers, it must be confessed, that the elements of his knowledge were not at variance with the principles of his policy.

Thus qualified, the *learned* but *benighted* James ascended the English throne. True wisdom can never appear so estimable as when we appreciate its value by the effects which the want of it necessarily produces.

Raised to an eminence which gratified his vanity and increased his presumption, he delivered lectures on the Nature of Government, the Extent of Prerogative, and the *true* Principles of Passive Obedience.

The instruction conveyed was not unworthy of the Royal Preceptor. His discourses were delivered as demonstrations, and his commands as irreversible decrees.



A happy period truly! and an appropriate theatre for such sublime exhibitions! The extravagance of his pretensions were only to be equalled by the sincerity with which they were accompanied. The enlightened policy of Elizabeth united the glory of the nation with the happiness of the people, and pointed out to her successor the infallible means by which power could be secured, as well as the purposes for which it was conferred.

The accession of James forms a peculiar æra in the history of our country. More arbitrary in theory, than qualified to reduce his principles to practice, he increased popular resentment, and diminished the authority by which he could arrest its progress.

Had his mind been directed to the analysis of man, of his motives and propensities; even with passions far more impetuous, and a heart more depraved, than his really were, yet he must have made this discovery, that *absolute power could only be retained by force, though inherited by descent or procured by stratagem*;—he would examine into the causes of national subjugation and alternate resistance, and at length discover, that, as the lust of power is a strong and impelling principle of human action, it could never be originally conferred on any individual, except from a conviction of mutual infirmities, and with full confidence of mutual protection.

In despotic states, where the origin and use

of power are equally unknown by those who are its victims, and studiously suppressed and concealed by those who are to wield its energies, *there* the work of oppression goes on with unabated vigour, until the measure of iniquity is filled up; until the laws of insulted nature are written in legible characters on the hearts of the oppressed, and until they appeal to Heaven to assuage their sufferings and to vindicate their wrongs. An alternative as awful as inevitable!

.. But when we reflect on the character of the nation James was called upon to govern—its alternate successes and defeats, before rights were secured by law which were implanted by nature; the triumph of reason over prejudice; the glory of its arms, with the plenitude of its power—we are at a loss to determine whether his presumption was as criminal as his elevation was deplorable.

He had sycophants, instead of advisers; and favourites, in the place of friends. If one faithful adviser could be found, who preferred royal indignation to national treachery, he would have warned his bewildered master of the precipice on which he stood; and though his prejudices might be inveterate, and his principles<sup>o</sup> unchangeable, yet he might have compelled him to adopt other measures by alarming his fears. But in policy as in religion, whenever either are perverted from their legitimate objects, truth, which is pure,

simple, and immutable, becomes offensive; *because it is not accommodating*; it will neither admit darkness to be called light, nor tyranny to be denominated protection.

As the greatest blessings we enjoy are ever attended with some alloy, with some correspondent evils, the Reformation, therefore, (though beneficial to all) produced two parties in the state: one, the advocates of free inquiry and constitutional controul; the other, the advocates of non-resistance and passive obedience—a doctrine equally applicable to religion as to government.

It is here essential to observe, that these parties, though produced by the Reformation, did not proceed from it as its immediate effects, but only as its remote consequences. Those of the latter description, though not numerous, were still sufficient to feed the hopes of intrigue, and to administer to all the purposes of faction.

During the reign of his enlightened predecessor no such distinctions existed. Her comprehensive policy knew no classifications. She embraced all denominations as her subjects; affording them the benefit of *equal laws*, and making them liable to *equal restrictions*. And it is a peculiar feature of the Reformation, that, at the period of its final completion, no alteration whatever was made in the general condition of her subjects. The terms proposed to the whole body of the Clergy had been, with very few exceptions, readily acceded

to; and they remained in the possession of their respective dignities and benefices, under certain limitations, free and undisturbed. It is not material to inquire how far their *apostacy* could impeach their *sanctity*; but in this truth all parties must agree, that they were neither worse subjects nor less enlightened pastors afterwards, than they were before.

The infatuated policy of James, however, made a distinction where there was no real difference. He identified speculative principles (the property of individuals) with those arbitrary principles of government with which he was infected; and by inflaming the prejudices of a few, he would have successfully invaded the security of those rights which were the common property of all his subjects, had not his claims then excited inquiry, afterwards provoked resistance, and ultimately erected the temple of constitutional liberty, on such a basis as, though it may be assailed or partially disfigured, can never be prostrated or destroyed.

Three properties of the Constitution, as applicable to the varied exercise of power, with its consequent effects on national liberty and security, are, at different periods, clearly discoverable; viz. endurance, enjoyment, and resistance. The existence of original rights coeval with man, and engrafted into his earliest policy, blending with his habits, and becoming the very elements of his

composition, were too firmly fixed, either to be erased from his memory or to cease from being the objects of his warmest affections.

Unprincipled power ultimately defeats its object, and recoils upon itself, destructive by its own weight. It can only be ephemeral, but liberty must be eternal: therefore, we have seen our wise ancestors effecting, by endurance, a restoration of those rights which, by their virtuous and patient labours, have been finally established.

We have seen also, the prerogatives of the Crown, securing the rights of the subject, (by affording him all the enjoyments of well-regulated freedom) in return increased and fortified, receiving a full measure of allegiance, rendered upon a conviction of uniform and equal protection.

It is true, force has made conquests, and conquerors have made laws; but it remained for the philosophic James to edify his subjects, both in England and Scotland, with the outlines of a *new* Constitution, simple, yet impressive\*. “Sic

\* The natural tendency of James's sentiments in favour of the tenets of the Church of Rome, may, in some degree, account for that mitigated exercise of his prerogative which, if extended farther, might, in the situation of Ireland at that period, be fully justified: but James held in abhorrence the doctrine of those who taught the supreme authority of the Pope, and what he called “an Imperial Civil Power over Kings and Emperors, to dethrone and decrown them at pleasure.” A proclamation, similar to that published in England, was issued, commanding all Jesuits and other priests, having

volo hoc jubeo stet pro ratione voluntas\*;" thus attempting to decompose the properties of moral nature; to fix the animal to his kindred earth, by debasing the faculty of reason, and to reign as the centre amidst that desolation which must then surround him. But his shallow ravings were injurious to himself and destructive to his successor.

From hence we may date the æra of that *resistance* which the temporary violence of undefined power would not have excited; but where the principle of unlimited power was proclaimed as a *right*, and sufferance enjoined as a *duty*, then deliberation ceased with hope, and, in the ensuing reign, resistance commenced with despair.

Until the commencement of the present reign, we have observed the Rights of the People following the course of events, and receiving such portions of successive strength as gave them a

orders from any foreign power, to depart from the kingdom, unless they conformed to the laws of the land. Vide Leland's History of Ireland, vol. ii. p. 434, with the authorities there cited. This proclamation produced the conviction of a person named Lalor, who exercised the office of Vicar-General in several dioceses, by virtue of a Commission from Rome. The punishment due to his crime, however, was not inflicted. He was brought to trial on the Stat. of Premunire, 16 Ric. II. to convince the Irish that the late declarations of the Royal Supremacy were only assertions of the Ancient Constitutional Rights of the Crown. Davis' Reports; case of Premunire.

\* Juvenal.

permanence and consistency that could not be dissipated.

We are now to behold a people substituting suspicion for confidence, and a sullen submission for a willing obedience; and to anticipate, with painful anxiety, those evils which humanity must ever deplore.

If an impartial analysis of the human heart, and consequent detection of its malignant qualities, is essential to individual happiness, how much more imperative must that process become either in the expectant or possessor of royal authority, who by virtue of such investiture is considered, and ought in reality to be, "*the guardian of the laws*," whose power is founded on them, and circumscribed by them. That such a character should not be unknown to himself, that he might not be the slave of passion, or the dupe of artifice, is a truth that has, in various ages of the world, been awfully demonstrated by the national effects which self-ignorance has ever produced.

Rights, previously enjoyed, were now assailed; the freedom of legislative discussion invaded; the Representatives of the People intimidated and imprisoned, for an honest discharge of indispensable duties\*; alarm created; power watched with jealousy, and rights cherished with increased attachment. The *real enemies* of the State be-

\* Hume's History of England, vol. vii. p. 11, ster. ed. Lond. 1810.

came the *actual* advisers of the Crown. Plots and conspiracies followed in rapid succession. With more sagacity to detect danger than wisdom to remove its cause, the deluded James then was saved, together with the nation, from an impending calamity, more by the intemperate zeal of foreign and domestic traitors, than by the prudence or energy of his counsels.

The nation's treasure was lavished on worthless minions, and on empty pageants. The wages of sin was duly paid: servile flattery and mean compliance was amply rewarded. To become the King's favourite was an enviable distinction, not a term of just reproach. The lines of demarcation between King and People were now too fatally discernible. Self-interest catered to royal infirmity, and faction added fuel to popular indignation. Thus a disclosure of arbitrary principles, without controul or limitation, produced a counter-declaration on the part of the People, in which those inherent principles of the Constitution before stated, are fully recognized and insisted on; viz. an identity of rights with a capability of privileges\*.

We are now arrived at a period when it may with truth be asserted, that the sins of the father were visited on his devoted descendant;—when opposition to royal authority became more for-

\* Hume's *England*, vol. vii. pp. 47, 48. Ster. ed. Lond, 1810;—Franklin, p. 65;—and Rushworth, vol. i. p. 53.



midable, as it was conducted with union, and supported with ability.

Possessing talents of no ordinary description, with a heart susceptible of the best impressions, the unhappy Charles became the depository of a precarious authority, which the treason of his advisers might worship, but could not sustain.

The qualities requisite for a statesman to possess, who is called upon to give advice to his Sovereign, are rare indeed. Conscious that he has two awful monitors to satisfy—his conscience and his country—his advice will ever be subservient to the means by which the one can be acquitted, and the true interests of the other permanently promoted. His advice will be accompanied with a becoming confidence, and with a sincerity anxious to enlighten the understanding and to improve the heart. Unconscious of intentional offence, he will not give a varnished description of national prosperity, to which its real situation may bear no resemblance; but he will disclose with fidelity to his royal master, the real state of the nation: “he will neither extenuate nor set down aught in malice;” but he will press his measures, regardless of selfish consequences; and if he cannot command success, he will do more—he will endeavour to deserve it. His demeanour will demonstrate the respect which royalty justly claims; but it will equally exhibit the disgust with which he can regard servile fear and mean ac-

quiescence. His language to his sovereign will convey this salutary truth: "Remember, Sire, that to be great, those whom you govern must be happy; and that even surrounded with all the grandeur of a court, you can shine but with a borrowed light, reflected from the prosperity of your People."—If his honest counsels will not be heard, unable to uphold, and unwilling to accelerate, the falling destinies of his country, he will seek consolation in retirement, and honour in virtue.

But Charles might in vain apply to those who composed his council, either for wisdom to direct, or vigour successfully to pursue, the sad alternative to which they had reduced him.

The principles of the preceding reign were now producing their pernicious and deadly fruits. Precedents of power successfully exerted against Right and Liberty at former periods of our history were then sedulously collected; but the infatuated advisers of their injured and insulted master did not reflect, that at the respective periods, to which such precedents alluded, the blindness of power, impelled by its own unresisted force, could not then distinguish *between a popular forbearance* that submitted to a temporary abuse of power, and a *popular recognition* which must legalize usurpation; that precedents, though the usual ramparts raised to fortify authority, can neither sanctify injustice nor annihilate

rights which were never disavowed or surrendered.

It is as foreign to my purpose as repugnant to my feelings, to dwell longer on the transactions of this disastrous period, than to evince the fatal effects of depraved and intemperate counsels both to King and People ; and also to prove that the legislative enactments of this and the succeeding reign, the beneficial effects of which have been felt and transmitted (without reference to the intermediate Usurpation) were *declarations* of *rights*, belonging equally to all, without difference or distinction, not *concessions* of privileges, newly acquired or unconstitutionally extorted.

The crisis had now arrived when the Representatives of the People were either to define and secure those rights, by means which the Constitution prescribed, or to surrender them to the Crown, and thereby to acknowledge that their claims were unfounded, and that the legal authority was as unlimited as the obedience of the People ought to be implicit and unqualified.

No middle course could then be adopted. If power was conceded to the Crown, which the Constitution did not recognize—if the Representatives of the People surrendered those rights and privileges which they were appointed to watch over and secure—if the will of the Sovereign was, by such surrender, to become the *supreme law*, and not the *law* the *rule* by which his power was to be

exercised, it would be afterwards impossible for the People to claim the restoration of those rights and privileges which, through the medium of their Representatives, would thus be so solemnly and formally disavowed and relinquished. Concluded by the act of those who had betrayed them, the People would become virtually parties to their political dissolution. Constitutional resistance must then have ceased, and the Government of these realms might now possess all the vigour of irresistible and undefined authority, and slaves, not subjects, become the instruments of an imperious will!

The advisers of the Crown committed *treason* against the Constitution; and having attempted to elevate their royal master above the laws, they even resorted to its professors, to sanction, by the authority of judicial decision, those violations which their desperate and unprincipled counsels so cruelly recommended.

Retaliation followed, without measure or controul;—though security consisted more in defining the extent of power, by boundaries that could not be mistaken, than by the subsequent restrictions of constitutional prerogative, which at length effected the ruin of both King and People.

Had that amiable, but ill-advised prince, read the history of man, in the history of the constitution, from its infancy to the period of his own

elevation, and reflected on the use and the abuse of power, as connected with its possessor, and as it related to those included within the scope of its operations; if the limits of prerogative were not attempted to be assailed or defaced, by his royal predecessor, but accurately traced out and defined from the ample materials he possessed, Charles would have reigned as a patriot king over an attached and loyal people.

One real benefit, however, has (in the midst of jarring elements) survived that national visitation. A petition of right, otherwise denominated "the Bill of Rights," passed in the third year of his unhappy reign; and truly, my Lord, the recital of grievances, contained in that petition, is a faithful transcript of power abused, and of endurance stimulated to resistance.

The conduct of the Commons, then, strictly justified the propriety of the term affixed to their remonstrance—"a Petition of Right:" not requiring novel or assumed privileges, they sought only to secure those rights which their ancestors declared to be *equal, original*; and *inalienable*, and which they had faithfully transmitted to their descendants, and that such petition was intended only as a confirmation of their rights, and was neither in *fact* nor *intention* an invasion of royal prerogative.

As many of the constitutional opponents of

the Crown of that period were equally distinguished by rank and property, as by talents and character, they appeared more anxious to prove their patriotism by giving salutary advice to the Crown, than to gain popularity by low or vulgar artifice. They placed themselves in an attitude of *defence*, but not of *defiance*.

*Previous to*, and *at the* period when this memorable Charter, or summary of constitutional liberty, was obtained, the royal prerogative suffered no diminution. . Composed of appropriate parts and dimensions, it would have wielded a salutary, and therefore unresisted, strength; but, extended beyond its just proportions, it spent its force and lost its elasticity.

Without adverting to the means by which the restoration of Charles II. was happily effected, or to the causes which led to the abdication of his successor, one characteristic of the Constitution, decisive of its peculiarity and applicable to my original purpose of explaining its nature and composition, is this; that after a lapse of many centuries, amidst the sanguinary conflicts of contending parties, not a single instance can be adduced to prove that the inherent principles of the Constitution, by which I mean the ancient rights and liberties of the people, *were ever disavowed or formally surrendered*.

Power, at various times, became tyranny; and

liberty, licentiousness. But the former was *submitted* to, *not sanctioned*—the latter only briefly endured.

The various legislative exertions in favour of constitutional liberty, are to be considered as *declaratory acts*, not *experimental enactments*; and whatever objections might be raised against the policy or justice with which power was exercised at the respective periods when such acts were confirmed; yet those illustrious characters, whose memories must be ever dear to their grateful and admiring country, (by whose labours our liberties were placed, as far as human wisdom could provide, beyond the caprice of power, or the intrigue of faction,) preserved and recognized these respective acts, bequeathing them to their posterity as invaluable legacies, amongst which the Habeas Corpus Act, passed at the end of Charles the Second's reign, is justly included; being the last act in favour of constitutional freedom, previous to the Revolution of 1688, by which personal liberty is secured, legitimate authority defined, and arbitrary imprisonments declared illegal and unconstitutional.

It will be freely admitted, that the friends of constitutional liberty have, at different periods of our history, since the passing of that memorable but declaratory Charter of personal liberty, suspended its operation, in order to preserve, not

to destroy it. But as the true principles of the Constitution were so accurately defined and fully recognized at the auspicious æra of the Revolution; as that diversity of opinion could only be exercised on their application, and not upon their nature or properties; it is reasonable to conclude that, whenever the supreme power of the Legislature exercised so tremendous but salutary an authority, the evidence on which suspension was founded must have been so imperative and irresistible as to carry with it the imposing force of actual demonstration: and as legislative wisdom must ever be evinced by its effects, it should also be presumed that clear and satisfactory evidence of the due and impartial administration of the laws previously existing had been *virtually* furnished, by the inability to produce negative or adverse testimony; and their actual inefficiency (though duly enforced) to stem the torrent of impending danger *so decidedly* established, that power would produce such confidence as must be accompanied by general co-operation, as the advocates of real liberty would then be conscious that the medicine of the Constitution was not converted into its daily food.

Those patriot worthies at the period of the Revolution were well qualified for the task they were called upon to perform. They were convinced that true legislation must ever consist in



rendering the *means* conducive to the *end*; that the objects proposed to be attained ought to be as essential for the community to enjoy, as the means by which they were to be effected should be honourable and constitutional; and that even then, such acts of legislation, though founded on experience, and matured by reflection, were only the expressions of the public will, *until their benefits were practically felt by their regular and impartial execution*. They were, therefore, equally formidable to the tools of faction and the slaves of power: each were alike baffled and dispirited.

The wisdom of our earlier ancestors never appeared so conspicuous as when the talents of our constitutional defenders were, at the æra of the Revolution, rather employed in securing those rights of inheritance to which we have succeeded, than in adopting new systems of legislation, which presumption might suggest, but their enlightened policy, matured by sad experience, justly reprobated and condemned.

Their policy was then conspicuous, when *power* was founded on *law*, and *allegiance* on *protection*; when personal disabilities ceased with the crimes that had produced them, and were succeeded by the confirmation of that happy Constitution which proclaims an identity of rights with a capability of privileges.

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We have now arrived at the Third Part of my subject, to which your Lordship's attention is requested, during my recital of the conditions to be performed by the subjects of every denomination who are candidates for the honours and privileges of the state, previous to their competency to hold or to enjoy them; and until I shall demonstrate that such conditions are not inconsistent with, or repugnant to, the letter or the spirit of the Christian Religion.

I have attempted, however imperfectly, to pourtray the leading feature of the British Constitution; viz. an identity of rights with a capability of privileges; and thus endeavoured to ascertain what the principles of the Constitution now *are*, containing those rights (without which men would be slaves, and their despoilers tyrants,) long since established and repeatedly confirmed. The objects, therefore, of human association have been attained: let it then be our especial care to guard and to protect them.

The various parts of our mixed government must retain their necessary and peculiar properties. Deliberation must imply *discretion*, and execution *power*. The former, as applicable to representation, invests its members with the character of *trustees*, not *instruments*; subject, however, after a stated period, to restore such trusts to the parties by whom they were appointed—

the People. The latter invests the head of the executive government with the office of "guardian of the laws," and emphatically terms him, after such investiture, "the King;" who is also, in his deliberative capacity, to be considered as one of the branches of the Constitution. The Lords are the hereditary counsellors of the Crown, *originally* intended (from a conviction of human imperfection) as the alternate shield by which faction might be frustrated, or illegal power mitigated and restrained.

Just as the proportions and beautiful the outlines of those component parts may possibly be and truly are, and great as the abuses discoverable at different æras, in their use and application, may prove to be, if even greater than what might reasonably be expected from such a combination of wise and salutary controul, yet, after the lapse of more than a century, what is truly valuable can be read in characters fixed and indelible; and as the *Constitution practically enjoyed* is the "consummation devoutly to be wished for," it is consoling to reflect, that its principles of health and vigour, if temperately revived and invigorated, will be discovered to be sound and unchangeable. The nature of its disease, however, with its *extent* and *cause*, must be dispassionately examined and clearly proved. Faction must not be permitted to make experiments, nor power to apply cor-

rosives, or to administer palliatives. A deep conviction of mutual danger must produce strength, and all the energies of a devoted and enlightened patriotism (constitutionally exercised) excited to animate and restore them.

The principles of the *Constitution*, not the conduct of the Government, claims my present attention; and with respect to the latter, I am free to say, that on the conduct of the Government no decision ought to be made, except on the clearest and most impartial evidence. Suffice it to say, that its advocates and opponents equally boast of impartiality, and, with very few exceptions, *malign* and *aspersion* each other from a *pure* and *disinterested* love of country; more anxious to detect *abuse*, or to discover *disaffection*, than dispassionately to examine evils, or to suggest remedies; to inflame the passions, more than to enlighten the understanding, thereby naturally exciting in those entrusted with authority, *pertinacity* of *power* in the ratio of its danger,—and in the people *violence*, without wisdom to direct, or a sufficient exercise of reason to regulate or restrain them,—thus neutralizing the efforts of genuine liberty and appropriate worth, and leaving the Constitution, without aid or support, to the struggles of its own internal strength.

But to return—The conditions to be performed by the various subjects of the state, as illustrated in the case of the Roman Catholics of Ireland,

previous to their possession of power and privilege; are *general, and not exclusive, imposed by a competent authority, the result of deliberate judgment, and perfectly consistent with the letter and spirit of the Christian Religion.*

It is one of the principles of an equitable Government, that *privileges and restrictions should be equal and co-extensive*, both the productions of artificial arrangement and matured policy.

Society, having advanced from security to enjoyment, assumed a new and more diversified appearance. The primary, but essential, objects of its formation having been previously obtained, civilization followed thought at some distance, bringing in its train the seminal principles of new combinations.

Man, ever susceptible of modification, discovered new springs of action, and unfolded the latent powers of his mind, in proportion to the motives which impelled and excited them. Happy, indeed, if that mind possessed any resemblance of its Great Original! But whether the native of the desert, or the obsequious worshipper at a polished court, man carries about him the unequivocal marks of imperfection and of crime; and though truth may be offensive, yet, by the cultivation of it *alone*, can our corrupt nature be improved and corrected.

Though convinced of the benefits which a state of society necessarily produces, yet I am satisfied

*that the uniform spirit of the Constitution consists, more in its capability to restrain in order to preserve, than in its power to bestow in order to reward. The latter would apply to man as he ought to be; the former to man as he truly is.* The Roman Catholics of Ireland are candidates, on equal terms with other subjects, for all the honours and privileges of the State. Why, or wherefore, they are not now possessed of them I must endeavour to discover. Of this, however, I am certain, that the Constitution is *comprehensive*, not *exclusive*; *equalizing* restraints, not *classifying* persons.

This position must, in fact, be admitted, otherwise negative proof is unreasonably required to establish the generality of the conditions imposed. *from the non-existence of peculiar or personal restrictions.* They will thus take advantage of their own wrong, by opposing the plea of conscience to the requisitions of positive institution.

Let us then consider how far such an objection is tenable, and by what sophistry it can be supported; and in so doing, it may not be irrelevant to state another principle of equitable government; viz. "*that as protection and subjection is mutual and reciprocal, so allegiance should be undivided, whilst protection is not withdrawn.*" This position ought doubtless, to receive unqualified assent, and its consequent conclusions become not only, the lines of duty, but also the rules of action: it may in terms be admitted; but is it in

fact complied with? Yet the plainest truths are often the most perverted. Our notions of political, as well as moral obedience, are too often reduced to the standard of narrow policy and accommodating morality. Man, too prone to level and debase whatever he is unable or unwilling to aspire to, wishes to become the centre of his own system ; to bring down the whole sphere of constitutional government, and to confine it within the limits of his shallow pretensions.

Mahomet's direction to the mountain to come to him did not undeceive his enlightened followers, nor was his authority endangered by his going to it. No doubt was entertained of his divine power, and, therefore, it could not be impeached. But the Roman Catholics of Ireland require that the Constitution should be brought to them: that is, that it should be so moulded, according to their prejudices, and agreeable to the deep knowledge of legislation evinced by their leaders, as to free them from that alloy which so *illiberally* accompanies wisdom and experience.

Your Lordship's sound and unbiassed judgment will, I trust, be exerted in combating such unwarrantable expectations, particularly as the qualification enjoined is calculated to elevate and not to degrade them ; and I am inclined to hope your exertions may be successful, as, in perusing some of their resolutions, I perceived that they

were denominated, “the Resolutions of the Catholics of Ireland,”—an appellation I shall continue to adopt, being of an extended signification, and capable of producing the most beneficial effect, enabling them to examine whether the Oath of Supremacy required as a condition to be performed, previous to the possession of honours and privileges, is, or is not, consistent with the strictest notions of genuine Catholicity.

Though the policy of our ancestors has, through successive ages, deemed a church establishment, as connected with the State, essential and indispensable (the truth of which it is not necessary here to examine), yet the same policy has declared, since the Reformation has been firmly established, that the rights of conscience should be held inviolate; that speculative opinions (unequivocally such) should be respected; and that, however prejudice might suggest a right to trammel and enslave the mind, and actually (as in other countries) to effect its purpose, yet in these more happy realms, that law, reason, and justice reprobated and disclaimed it.

Though the generality of the conditions for which I am to contend cannot be formally impeached, yet I am aware of an objection that has been raised against them; viz. that the Catholics of Ireland were possessed of honours and privileges, of which they were, a few years after the



*Revolution of 1688, deprived and dispossessed.* Such objection has been often made; but for what good purpose I am at a loss to learn. Is it in order to conciliate, or to divide? Alas, my Lord! the actors of that day are mingled with their kindred earth. They cannot now silence clamour, or disprove assertion. Even the records of the transaction, examined with party feelings, would be considered as very equivocal evidence of political wisdom.

I would not advert to this ungracious subject, were it not to consider privations, when applied to particular communities, as the productions of an imperious, not an undefined policy, suspending privileges, in order ultimately to preserve them; and though I may lament the necessity of such a policy, and regret that some other mode of security was not resorted to, yet I am not prepared to pronounce such an aggravated libel upon our common nature (sufficiently laden with its native imperfections) as to conceive the possibility of *national representation* (however constituted) converted into *national conspiracy*, and that also against the rights and privileges of a *loyal* and *inoffending* people; and, to complete the scene, such conspiracy not *ephemeral* or *transitory*, but *uniform*, and *continued* from the 8th and 9th of William the Third to the 18th year of the King. *Crædat Judæus!* The extent and magnitude of

credulity sufficient to account for and to explain such a phenomenon, far exceeds the limits of my vulgar and contracted mind.

The concession proves too much ; for, in order to impeach the generality of those conditions for which I am to contend, we must presume *guilt* without *motive*, and *crime* without the possibility of *enjoyment* \*.

When charges are rashly made, retaliation becomes a necessary consequence. The object of the Catholic Petition is, to be admitted to a participation of political power and privileges. If the conduct of a subsequent Parliament is to be arraigned and condemned, that of a preceding one, convened by James the Second, on the 7th May, 1689, at Dublin, is not to pass unnoticed ; or, if adverted to, will the acts that emanated from it prove the security which the Constitution must acquire by the admission of Catholics to the possession of political power†.

\* It may easily be ascertained, by reference to English Statutes, that the restrictions imposed upon the Catholics of England were more severe than those imposed upon the Irish Catholics during the same period ;—that in William's reign the former were disqualified from purchasing real estates ; a disability not imposed upon the latter until the reign of Anne ;—and that the code of the Penal Laws which existed in Ireland was highly injurious to the properties of those who voted for it.

† See vol. iii. of Leland's History of Ireland, pp. 556—565, with the authorities there cited.

But, my Lord, personal disabilities have ceased; privations still remain. During the continuance of the former, Catholics, as such, were incompetent to possess power or to enjoy privileges: *now* their competency is *conditionally* restored, and consequently depends upon themselves, it being “a solecism to think to command the end, without enduring the means\*.” But, as no proof has as yet been adduced, drawn from experience, to impeach the policy or justice of those conditions, equally obligatory on all the subjects of these Realms; and, as the petition of the Catholics is, *that they may be admitted into all the privileges of the Constitution*; one or the other of these points must be conceded;—either the Constitution must be new modelled, or they must accept the privileges of the Constitution subject to the prescribed conditions.

I will not impeach the sanity of your mind by inquiring from whom concession should come, unless such a case can be established as will be sufficient to disprove the wisdom and policy of our immortal ancestors: but I will make an appeal to your conscience, which, I am satisfied, you will neither shrink from nor evade; and your answer will best appreciate the wisdom or folly of that Constitution, for whose honours and privileges the Catholics of Ireland are at present candidates. Let us suppose the Protestants of Ireland peti-

\* Bacon's Essays.

tioners to a Catholic Government for those very honours and privileges which, at one period (and that not a remote one), were loudly and imperiously demanded; would its *liberality* and enlightened wisdom be proclaimed by the publication of unconditional power and privileges? The effects of power on the human mind, aided by the instructive page of history, will furnish ample materials for a decided answer. If I have not made a false estimate of your Lordship's character, you will not consider the answer expected, as unjust or unreasonable; not destructive of their legitimate hopes, but salutary and beneficial—clearing away the rubbish which disfigures and impedes their completion.

You can, I doubt not, separate sound from sense, and profession from performance. You can justly estimate those imposing terms “*liberality and enlightened sentiment*,” as peculiarly applicable to the 19th century. You can feel the folly and the crime of actions, which, though privately reprobated, it might not be politic for the higher classes of the Catholics of Ireland publicly to condemn. You can calculate the value of that patriotism (treason rather inchoate, but not complete,) which proposed to unfold the long and bitter roll of penalties and privations (under which the Catholics of Ireland are stated to writhe and suffer) to the inspection and powerful mediation of an *enlightened* nation, which is now

in the full possession and *unenvied* enjoyment of *religious* liberty! The scene of desolation to which their embassy was to be directed, lies in Spain—a country meriting erasure from the map of nations. Finally, you can distinguish legislation and philosophy from a spurious imitation, and clearly perceive that the desires of ambition, in ordinary minds, are providentially restrained and defeated. Impulse, more than reflection, must be predominant, and its effects fatally appear whenever the plain import of words is perverted, and deliberation proceeds on the assumption of abstract principles, to which our weak and finite nature has no just pretensions.

I will, therefore, pursue the subject by inquiring into the nature of the various objections raised on the score of conscience or religion, against the conditions which the Constitution prescribes as preliminaries for power and privilege, imperative and indispensable, and will commence with the Oath of Supremacy; and to facilitate the inquiry, I will denominate the candidates as “the Catholics of Ireland:” and truly, my Lord, I would not descend to catch at any advantage, which a mere play on words could produce, but that I sincerely hope such denomination is not a vague and empty sound. Their cause, *well understood*, is mine. It is the cause of every man who can separate truth from falsehood, and liberty from bondage.

The term “Catholic” could not be rashly used

or inconsiderately adopted, particularly as it came from those liberal and enlightened legislators who composed a patriot committee, and gratuitously laboured to improve and harmonize their country: therefore, as the term has been maturely weighed and considered, I trust, its inseparable benefits will be evinced and permanently enjoyed.

Who then are Catholics according to the *scriptural* and consequently *catholic* meaning of the term? I answer, "Every human being who believes the truths of Divine Revelation, as contained in the New Testament, to be a dispensation of Mercy to a guilty world, of which Christ is the Author and Finisher, supreme and alone, without rival or representative—emphatically the Head of his church, and which he will supremely and exclusively govern, until the consummation of all things."

As this character of the true church is founded on the authority of the New Testament, to which Catholics subscribe, it is not amongst the least of our privileges as freemen "of that city not made with hands, eternal in the heavens," that we can examine *the Charter of our Emancipation*, free, and unrestrained, written with the finger of the living God, in such broad and impressive characters, "that the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein," intended for the benefit of all—Christ himself, the *sole* Interpreter, who, through

the agency of the Holy Spirit, can illumine the darkened mind and bend the stubborn heart. Christ the Interpreter! How impious then would it be to suppose the necessity of a created one! The firm belief in his power to effect, and in his inclination (by our use of appointed means) to accomplish, will justly entitle every man, having such views, to the high appellation of "Catholic." However we may differ in mere speculative opinions, on which liberty may be fairly exercised, yet here, my Lord, is a cardinal point of agreement, from which I may safely presume there will be no dissent, at least I am persuaded there can be no *catholic* difference, as the truths advanced are as *certain* as the term is *universal*.

And though the term "Catholic," thus defined, may discover marks and features more sublimated than we are often able to behold; yet, if no principle is instilled into the mind destructive of genuine Catholicity, the weakest faith may become strong through the powerful operation of this "engrafted word."

The meaning of the term "Catholic" being now fixed and determinate, let us consider how far the Oath of Supremacy is agreeable or contrary to the *spirit* of such denomination; more especially as the objection is *religious*, not *civil*; and, therefore, must be supported or falsified by the best and most authentic evidence (the Scriptures) as the accredited standard of that truth which

Christians of every denomination profess to believe. And as such objection has been voluntarily made, not provoked, I am compelled to an inquiry into the nature and character of infallibility in order to invalidate an objection which they may continue to raise, but which, on the principles of reason and of religion, they will be utterly unable to sustain; and yet, with a diffidence that I would not attempt to describe, they have marked the precise limits which such legislative discretion is not to exceed.

The Catholics of Ireland have *at length*, however, assumed the existence of legislative discretion, otherwise legislation would become "the tyranny of the many;" and the power and privileges they are solicitous to obtain, would be equally precarious as contemptible: but they have expressed a hope that such discretion should be exercised with a due respect for the safety and integrity of their religion.

I cannot comprehend the necessity of this precaution. Let the Catholics of Ireland be composed by this assurance, from unquestionable authority, that their religion, "if it be of God," cannot be overthrown. If it be founded on a Rock, ("for other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ,") then, indeed, "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Relying *solely* on that great Atonement, and rejecting all other aids as vain and criminal,



whether the subjects of a republican or arbitrary government, they might with equal indifference await the decisions of a tumultuous senate or the ravings of unprincipled power: their faith (that is, their religion) would even then survive the shock—it would be truly steadfast as founded on a *Rock* that could not be shaken.

What fears, therefore, can the Catholics of Ireland now entertain, living under the genial influence of toleration and benevolence? True, it is to qualify every subject (be his religious profession what it may) for power and privileges: the Oath of Supremacy must be duly administered, and unequivocally taken, (and in requiring which no breach of toleration can be justly chargeable), by which the party to whom it is administered must take the same, “in animum proponentis,” acknowledging that the King is not only head of the State, but also of the Church. Here the substance of the oath is given without colouring or evasion. Though the term “Head of the Church” is not the term which a real Catholic would choose to adopt, (as in a *spiritual* sense, it can apply to Christ *alone*), yet the true meaning which is affixed to such term, viz. “the chief magistrate in ecclesiastical affairs,” deprives it of what otherwise every true Catholic would consider as impious and unwarrantable.

Such then being the nature of the oath and its

true sense and meaning, what are the objections that can be fairly urged against it? Is such obligation contrary to the written word of God? Can man, the creature, under the semblance of religion, raise objections to human authority, which wisdom itself neither sanctions nor enjoins? Is the Oath of Supremacy of a partial or of a general character? Does it not extend its operation equally to every other religious profession? Has not the great Founder of our common faith declared, "that his kingdom is not of this world," thereby plainly giving to the different nations of the earth a power to form associations, and to secure them by such ramparts and modes of defence, as those entrusted with their safety were bound to provide? Are we not directed "to submit ourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the King as supreme\*."—Here, my Lord, you must perceive there is no distinction made between temporal and spiritual authority, (neither could there be); but the obedience is absolute "to the King as supreme:" for on the genuine principles of Catholicity our allegiance to Christ is *anterior* and *retrospective*; for "we are not our own, we are bought with a price, even with the precious blood of our great and only Master, Christ." We are his by a paramount and indisputable title: our allegiance to him (being of so transcendent a

\* 1 Pet. ii. 12.

## the sacred *Scriptures of the New Testament.*

The plea of conscience, *therefore*, to the requisitions of human authority must for ever cease and determine, more especially as no arbitrary or forced construction—no subtle quibble or convenient inference, under the imposing or mysterious colour of the “*infallibility of the church*,” can either palliate or justify so profane a transfer.

If, however, Scripture is still relied on as an authority for so great an innovation, it cannot be discovered in that record, the contents of which were “first delivered to the saints:” it must be disclosed in a *new Gospel* since *exclusively* revealed for the edification of the Church of Rome.

I am well satisfied to bear with patience every opprobrious epithet our copious language is qualified to bestow, provided I can effect a higher purpose; viz. *the temporal and eternal welfare of all mankind.*

Hitherto, my Lord, we have advanced on principles sure and steadfast—sealed and confirmed by the high authority of unerring Truth!—principles which may, and probably will, be nibbled at—but in vain: they are as *immortal*, as the Source

~~from~~ whence they spring is *infinite* and *inexhaustible* !

What I have now advanced on truly *Catholic* principles will, I trust, substantially coincide (on dispassionate reflection) with your Lordship's opinions ; yet whatever verbal distinctions might exist between us, I am convinced you will perfectly agree with me, when I assert, that in every well-regulated state, original rights ; viz. those of life, liberty, and property, were ever the primary objects of its unceasing care : living under the empire of equal laws, *their value must be peculiarly felt when they are peculiarly enjoyed* : every precaution, therefore, necessary to defend and to secure them is promptly and decidedly adopted, and for that purpose falsification of a record is punishable with death. Why ? Because by its *immutability* those rights can *alone* be protected.

The love of gain, “ *auri sacra fames*,” revenge, and the whole catalogue of malignant passions with which we are often actuated, urge and impel their victim to commit a crime against the security of society, which the policy of the law considers as insecure, and unsatisfied until the life of the delinquent has paid the awful forfeiture. The crime and the punishment, however, are in due proportion. The law considers the production of the record as *indispensable* to secure the right of property, being primary evidence not to be controuled by that of an extrinsic or parol

nature. It apportions the punishment to the magnitude of the offence, and to the improbability and consequent difficulty of perpetration.

*This rule of evidence applies to private as well as public records. To instance it in the former:—* if the muniments or title-deeds of your estate (whether retained in your possession or entrusted to another person) were stolen, or falsified by erasure of terms necessary to secure your rights, and supplied by those calculated only to destroy them, would you not naturally exclaim, “An enemy hath done this!” And thus convinced, in defence of that property which you justly consider as truly dear and valuable, would a moment be wasted until in the one case you had restored such titles to their true meaning and original purity, if possible to be effected; and in the other would pursuit cease, or exertion abate, until you had recovered their possession, and in both cases punished the delinquent? Your answer is not required—it is at once anticipated.

Property possesses a *relative* not a *positive* value. That description of property which can not only be devised but is capable of legal perpetuity, is of the highest order, and of the greatest value, descending by a graduated scale to the possession for a year, or enjoyment for a single life: necessarily varying our attachment, as on such a scale it appears either to be elevated or depressed,

yet capable of enjoyment only in its most depreciated state, we annex to it a species of selfish immortality, which we would vainly expect to realize. Property still is valuable; and experience proves that inclination to guard and to secure it with appropriate deeds or documents, is so intense and persevering that lectures on the necessity of zeal and circumspection become really “works of supererogation.”

But, if property is *truly valuable*, let me point out to Catholics “that inheritance which is incorruptible and fadeth not away, eternal in the heavens.” There, indeed, we may be, *not* its purchasers, but possessors with full notice, (if not blindly and desperately rejected), “without money and without price;”—our inheritance having been already purchased with *such* a price, and of *such* a value, as exceeds all the powers of the mind to calculate or conceive; and when I reflect on such properties as those of certainty and perpetuity annexed to it, I am lost in wonder and have not words for praise!

Who then are the possessors of this great Charter of our Liberties; of this essential title to such an invaluable inheritance? And to whom does its possession and use absolutely belong?—To the first question, I answer: “Catholics” are the possessors of it; and the use and possession, with the consequent means of enjoyment, are equally theirs. Who are also intitled to, and yet deprived

of its possession, and therefore starved for want of spiritual food? Anti-catholics. Who are the persons to whom its possession is sometimes partially and discretionally restored? Anti-catholics. What is the authority that assumes the exclusive right, and exercises the power, of guarding and withholding this sacred title, and of interpreting it according to its will? The Church. What is the authority that, under the semblance and pretence of a vicarious and delegated power, disfigures and obscures this sacred title, and imposes its decrees upon its votaries as the revelations of Omnipotence? What is the authority that designates and describes the sacred Scriptures of truth as “unsensed and uncharactered,” until vivified and illustrated by their midnight lucubrations? The Church of Rome. How is it composed, and what is the authority competent to issue such decrees? The Pope and Council. Is this authority expressed *in* and recognized *by* the sacred Record? No indeed. Has our Head and Master, Christ, designated or described in the sacred Record, any created being as his vicar or vicegerent, on whom he has conferred representative authority? No truly: Christ has left no representative, but many witnesses. Who has arrogated and assumed these titles? The Pope. What does this sacred title (the New Testament) direct and enforce? It directs every human being, living in that place or country to

which the glad tidings of salvation have extended, “to prove all things, and to hold fast that which is good.” It directs us to search the Scriptures; and the Apostle Paul commends Timothy for having from a child known the holy Scriptures (the Old Testament), which were able to make him wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Jesus Christ; and the Apostle John directs us to try the spirits whether they be of God, and assigns this reason, “because many false prophets are gone out into the world;” and finally, the Apostle Peter expressly says, “And be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you, a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear\*.” These are directions which it would be criminal to disobey, and madness to disregard; for this decisive reason, *because they are enjoined and written by the Spirit of the living God!* and, to use the language of the Apostle Peter and the other Apostles, “We are to obey God rather than men †.”

This system of vassalage which I have described by interrogatories, is not overcharged or distorted: it is, I fear, a faithful representation of the state of moral debasement, to which (in this *liberal* and *enlightened* age), many European nations have, for centuries, been reduced, and even still submit to, unconscious of their servitude.

I am anxious to inquire, not to impeach. Let it then, my Lord, be your privilege, equally as

\* 1 Pet. iii. 15.

† Acts v. 29.



your duty, to examine whether such a system obtains in Ireland or not. If your report should be of a *negative* description, then truly, the Catholics of Ireland will be fully competent to enjoy all the honours and privileges of the State, as I am satisfied their request will be fully gratified.

If, however, such report should be of an *affirmative* nature; if the marks and features of such a system are so strongly and impressively written as not to escape your impartial observations, then, indeed, your advice and exertions must be zealous and unremitting; then the language fit to be applied to my enslaved countrymen must be, “Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage\*.” Inform them, that there is a certain Charter (the Bible, their undoubted property) in which this precept is plainly enjoined; and, that it also contains this animating assurance to those who believe in their *only* Head and Master Christ, that “ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” They may doubtless reply (not in *terms*, as that would be impossible, but in *substance*, as the Jews of old did to our Saviour), “We be Abraham’s seed, and were never in bondage to any man? How sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?†” The reply of the Saviour is as applicable *at this moment* as it was then: “Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin,

\* Gal. v. 1.

† John viii. 32.

and the servant abideth not in the house for ever, but the Son abideth for ever: if the Son, therefore, shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed \*."

Tell them, that their right to possess this Charter is of so high a nature that time, however extended, since the perpetration of the crime, cannot sanction gross and unqualified injustice: that the excuse urged for retaining it, on the supposed authority of the Church to grant or withhold it, is an aggravation of guilt; as it is the exercise of a power directly opposed to the plain and positive commands of God, which not only directs them (*all* without distinction) "to prove all things," but also to "hold fast that which is good."

Their pastors pretend to tell them what the will of God is, as *expressed by the Church*; but they deprive their victims of the *means* of knowing "whether these things are so." Sound policy, which, in ordinary cases, is only a choice of evils, will here prove the *sovereign good*, and appear most efficient, where moral deformity is most confirmed, as its effects will be anticipated, and may be prevented. If you consider this subject in a *Catholic* point of view, of which it would be *unliberal* for me to entertain any doubt, your exertions (co-operating with the Divine blessing) may be productive, not only of light and liberty in the emancipation of Ireland, from spiritual ty-

\* John viii. 33—36.

ranny, but also to a considerable portion of the globe, now benighted and enslaved, as the means to be proposed will be fully competent to achieve *the end expected*; and, considering the present æra as that in which the second propagation of the Gospel has commenced, we may fairly presume, that if the cause of error was once removed, its effects would soon vanish away. And though faction may oppose and bigotry malign your character, yet, like gold passed through the fire, it will undergo the ordeal without loss or diminution. And really, my Lord, that sickly and distempered liberality so much extolled, cannot be the legitimate offspring of Christian charity, if ever it deprecates or condemns the man who rests not satisfied with the discovery of the disease until he has prescribed and endeavoured to apply an *infallible* remedy; yet even then, censure would become praise, and obloquy consolation.

As prejudice may be justly said to have neither eyes nor ears, it may yet be objected, that supposing, but not admitting, the truth of the preceding remarks, no impediment ought to be thrown in the way of Catholic expectations which could ultimately defeat and disappoint them; and such objection may be fortified, by urging the impolicy of refusal, as the dangers formerly so justly apprehended, will not again return; besides having conformed to the requisitions of the State, by taking the Oath of Allegiance, enough has

been done by them, as faithful subjects, *to acquire power and privileges; and that any oath or condition prescribed, contrary to the rules of their religion, must be considered as persecution for conscience sake; that, therefore, the Oath of Supremacy should not be required as a precedent condition to be performed.*

This objection will, I trust, be considered as fairly made and sufficiently comprehensive; but before I reply, permit me to say, that your Lordship's report of the moral and religious state of the Catholics of Ireland, will either supersede the necessity of any objections, by either your virtual or express admission of their incompetence, or it will so fortify the objections as to render it equally disingenuous as hopeless to attempt to solve or to refute them.

Proceeding, however, on a supposition that such Anti-catholic marks and features, as before adverted to, might be discoverable from your Lordship's report, I answer to the first part of the objection, which runs thus:—*No impediment ought to be thrown in the way of Catholic expectations which could ultimately defeat or disappoint them; or, in other words, that the Catholics, being subject to the same laws, should be rendered capable of enjoying the same privileges.*

*True* in reasoning, if the term "Catholic" is used in its general and extended signification, but *false in fact* where the term must be qualified and

restrained, as the marks and features which are *not discoverable in the "Catholic" become the true and distinguishing characters of the Anti-catholic.*

Let it not for a moment be supposed, that my object is to explore into, or probe, the height and depth of *Catholic Theology*, as being far too mysterious and profound for the limits of my humble reason.

Though anxious to rescue them from spiritual tyranny, my immediate object is to inquire, whether they hold any opinions incompatible with those provisions which our ancestors (reasoning from experience, and not bewildered with abstract principles,) considered as *wise, salutary, and indispensable*; and if, on such an inquiry, principles, or rules of faith, are discovered repugnant to and incompatible with such expectations, then we are next to ascertain *by whom* concession is to be made;—*whether* by the *Petitioners*, who, though not *incompetent* witnesses to impeach the wisdom of our ancestors, at least could not be considered as wholly *disinterested*; or by the *Legislature*, which, though not actually bound and restrained by the acts of former Parliaments, yet ought not to invalidate or repeal them, except on the clearest and most satisfactory evidence.

The Catholics, being subject to equal laws, are entitled to, and *now* possessed of, *equal rights, not equal privileges*. The distinction is wisely and

clearly marked. Those rights, viz. of *life, liberty, and property* (to which I before alluded), were and are *inalienable*, claimed and enjoyed by man in his *savage*, and now secured in his *social*, state ; for which security and enjoyment he gives, as an equivalent, his fealty and allegiance ;—a *duty* required for benefits received, *not* a *qualification* performed for privileges to be conferred. The former are identified with the first principles of equitable government : the latter are the effects of deliberation and of choice, emanating from *discretionary* but also *constitutional* authority.

It would disgrace and deform any country, to persecute for conscience sake ; but more especially so, those favoured realms, where the religion of the Bible *only*, as the religion of the State, is professed and taught,—where the precepts of, “Love your enemies, Do good to them that hate you, and despitefully use you, and persecute you\*,” are enjoined and practised,—where Charity, issuing from the ocean of universal Benevolence, sheds its blessings with unsparing hand on all, without distinction of sect or party ; that, in such a country, man could now be persecuted for conscience sake, would be as miraculous as it is evident it would be anti-Christian.

Let us then, in the *farther* refutation of this part of the objection ; viz. that, therefore, the Oath of Supremacy should not be required as a precedent condition to be performed ; examine its

\* Matt. v. 44.

pretensions, and endeavour to detect its fallacy: and for that purpose it may not be irrelevant to inquire, whether the real cause of objection to the Oath of Supremacy is not *temporal*, though stated to be *spiritual*; and, in so doing, to discover whether Papal ambition has not effected by the *abuse* of religion, a delusion and insecurity which its *use* would have long since dissipated and destroyed.

Amidst the various sects of Christianity which have appeared in the course of successive ages, as distinguished from those who acknowledge the spiritual authority of the Papal Power, (though many are the errors and differences subsisting between them), yet I know of none who assumed any authority over the consciences of mankind, in direct opposition to the truths contained in the Gospel of the New Testament; but, on the contrary, that their foundation and superstructure are composed of those materials which that record so amply supplies.

The *means* by which practical religion is to be known and felt, is within their power to obtain; and though its precepts may be disobeyed, and its sanctions disregarded, yet the most profligate and abandoned can, at once, distinguish the nature of that supreme homage and obedience which is due, and owing to God *alone*. Of this truth they are firmly persuaded; and therefore, though they may not improve the talent with which they are entrusted, yet the supreme duty

of allegiance which they owe to God (however neglected) is never *confounded* with that obedience which the laws of their country require, though such laws may be violated and insulted.

If they err, it is *against* knowledge, not for the *lack* of it. They know at all events this truth; viz. "that the kingdom of Christ is not of this world." Hence the duties which they owe to the State can never interfere with that supreme duty which is mandatory on them as the subjects of a reversionary and heavenly kingdom. Though they may "render honour to whom honour is due," yet they regard their ministers only as the instruments of the word, which, if not faithfully disclosed, they can detect either their errors or impositions, by a reference to the *Charter itself*, and examine "whether these things are so:" or if even given over to a reprobate sense, (as the crime of rejecting the Gospel is in itself of sufficient magnitude), *at least* they do not add to their guilt by acknowledging the divine or delegated authority of any created being, from whom they would ever expect consolation or forgiveness.

But the policy of the Church of Rome has been peculiarly marked, by requiring an obedience to its decrees, so implicit and unqualified, that its votaries, in a spiritual sense, are (in contradiction to the meaning of terms) the subjects of a *temporal*, though denominated a *spiritual*, kingdom; and



*as that authority is most arbitrary which is least defined, the Church of Rome ascertains no limits beyond which its power cannot extend; but, "wise in its generation," proportions the obedience required to the necessities which may demand them: and by affixing crime even to doubt, and apostacy to inquiry, the origin and nature of its assumed spiritual authority is so overshadowed and obscured from profane observation, that allegiance thereto becomes implicit and supreme, and the security extended to the state, for the performance of the duty of allegiance, rests upon the discretion of its own infallible will !*

The subject urges me to a detail which I could wish to avoid, were I not satisfied that, though Catholics may be intitled to toleration, yet until they escape from their present yoke of bondage they must be incapable of enjoying the blessings of constitutional freedom, and therefore are unfit depositaries of power or of privilege.

To a mind cultivated and informed, it is needless to say, that opinions (particularly those of a religious description) should be acquired by reflection and choice as the fruits of free inquiry;—not adopted by *chance*, neither inherited by *descent* not taken by *devise* or *entail*. This assertion may be justly considered as an axiom to which I am satisfied your Lordship will fully subscribe.

What then is the peculiar character of the

Anti-catholic system? “It is the exercise of a divine power (claimed by a *sinner* as a right vested by apostolic succession) over his *fellow-sinners*, calling on them to yield to his authority, together with that of his council, unqualified belief and unconditional obedience, under the penalties of excommunication and excision.”

Here then is an admirable specimen of *pastoral care*, not depending for support upon the sacred Record, but founding its pretensions upon the “infallibility of the church.” And truly, my Lord, these terms are so fraught with absurdity, that I know not where first to attack them; for if the word “church” is to be read in its plain *scriptural* sense, and consequently *catholic* meaning, I must thus define it—“a congregation of the *faithful* of every denomination over all the world, who believe and confide in the authority of Christ alone.”

If such definition is true, (and I challenge rigid investigation), it follows by inevitable inference, that the church which answers this description is truly “catholic” and “universal,” and equally infallible also with that church which now *exclusively* assumes it;—for the true church, as I have defined it, is heir to all the promises; and if its great Head and Master, Christ, has bestowed such a gift upon it as that of infallibility, the gift must be as *extensive* in its nature as beneficial in its consequences; and as the Giver (on the authority of the Apostle Peter) “is no respecter of persons,”

every true believer must necessarily be infallible: the gift, however, as *exclusively* claimed by the Church of Rome, to render it truly precious, should also contain an antidote against *delusion* and *depravity*.

Let us, however, reflect on its first fruits. And here, my Lord, I again repeat it, the Church of Christ is *catholic*, and therefore *universal*. How then is the Catholic Church, in its restricted sense, viz. the Church of Rome, to be *squared* and *fitted* to the definition I have given of the “Catholic Church of Christ?” Two modes are suggested: either by a continuance of the summary process of excision, as appertaining to the “pastoral care,” against all those who do not acknowledge the authority of this *particular universal* church, (thus bringing the Church of Rome *alone* within the terms of the definition), *or* by a public *recantation* (*not disclaimer*) of an Anti-catholic doctrine, “that there is no salvation out of the pale of the Church of Rome.”

I am fully aware it will be objected, that if this doctrine or tenet is considered as uncharitable, the same objection lies against every religious association, as each considers the society to which he belongs as the true church. Admitted:—every person, having the use of his faculties, that enters into and becomes a member of any religious society by *choice*, and not by *descent* or by *compulsion*, uninfluenced by the base and sordid motives of *human fear* or *individual interest*, must

necessarily be enabled to state his reasons for preference and selection; as also his hopes, through the merits of his Redeemer, ultimately to obtain salvation, and therefore to conclude that he is a Member of the true Catholic Church of Christ: he admits that there is but *one* body under *one* Head, Christ Jesus, but that in this body there are *many* members, and asserts, that the society to which he belongs is as true a member of it as the respective societies to which each individual is peculiarly attached can possibly be.

The distinction, however, between the *Catholic* and *Anti-catholic* doctrine is this: — the *former* (as its name imports) considers every human being who has heard the glad tidings of salvation, and confidently believes *in*, and firmly relies *on*, the hope that is *there* set before him, will obtain salvation. The *latter*, by a scale of *inverted* proportion, declares, that the *part* comprehends the whole! that the Roman Catholic comprehends and includes the *whole universal church*; and that, being thus comprehensive, it must be the only true church, and therefore the only one in which salvation can be found.

This exclusive doctrine is *directly* contradicted on the authority of that very Apostle from whom the Popes of Rome pretended to derive their usurped power, who expressly says, “Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth him and

worketh righteousness, is accepted with him\*.” Doubtless, if the premises are *conceded*, the conclusion must be irresistible.

Sublimated doctrine in this *liberal* and *enlightened* century! at a period too when the Catholics of Ireland, *professing* to soar above low and wicked prejudices, are candidates for the honours and privileges of the State; *professing* also to extend the right hand of Christian fellowship to all their Protestant brethren;—that at such a period they should require a share in the distinguished enjoyments of this world, when their Protestant brethren are *excluded* (by the decision of an infallible church) from those eternal and invaluable privileges of another and a better world, which the members of the Church of Rome are (by such a decision) *alone* competent to enjoy, exhibits such a phenomenon as even the infallibility of the church, though it may attempt to *confound*, will never be *able* or *willing* to *explain*.

I can at once anticipate the honest indignation with which many of its more enlightened members will peruse this part of my address, conscious as I am that they are ashamed to avow the existence of a doctrine which charity compels me to conclude they do not believe.

Let them, however, recollect, that *my* warfare is directed against *measures*, not *men*—that, though they are not chargeable *with* or responsible *for*

\* Acts x. 33.

acts to which they did not assent, yet that a mere conviction of their own innocence and consequent disclaimer of a doctrine which experience has *fatally* proved to be *practically injurious* to society, is not the best evidence that can be adduced of Catholic sincerity, when one or the other of two remedies may be resorted to;—*either* to become the means by which such doctrine should not only be *repealed* but also *renounced*, by an authority *equal* to that by which the belief of it was imposed or established; *or* to separate from a society that could maintain so unwarrantable a doctrine, as destructive of public security as it is evidently subversive of the whole scheme of Gospel Salvation;—otherwise professions will be worse than sounds, and adherence to such an authority become the virtual recognition of a doctrine which they may have previously disclaimed.

To examine into the more detailed effects and consequences of Infallibility (as applicable to its believers as well as to society at large) is essential and indispensable, as bearing *directly* on the policy of the Oath of Supremacy as a precedent condition to be performed; for really, my Lord, as to the “rock” and the “keys” on which Infallibility is vainly founded, Salamanca and Madrid, Paris and Rome, are the appropriate theatres for such an *enlightened* and *profound* discussion,

But it may be urged by the Clergy of that

communion, that the doctrine of exclusive salvation (as the first fruits of infallibility) cannot interfere with their duties or those of their flocks, either as men or subjects; as they not only inculcate the *purest* morality and the most *stedfast* loyalty, but can also fully explain the meaning of the following text: "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things which are God's."

Their knowledge of this text is *unquestionable*. Taught by infallible authority, they, delivered (during many gloomy centuries) *practical* and *convincing* lectures on this lucrative quotation; illustrating the meaning of the words, "the things that are God's," by this pious translation, "the things that belong unto the church;" and whilst mighty empires were BLESSED and burthened with their tyrannic sway, the patrimony of St. Peter (to which *he* was an utter stranger) was, however, unceasingly cultivated.

That power in these realms has now ceased, but its policy and influence still remains, experience has clearly proved.

Expedient has since assumed its place, and effects, by dexterity and address, what was previously obtained by force; but the necessity of some rule or standard to which the extent of obligation to the church should be reduced and applied, must be obvious, if you consider that the Scriptures of truth, which *alone* contain the *precepts* of the purest morality, are sealed up

and closed, and this fountain of living waters thereby prevented from flowing, in copious and fertilizing streams, over a barren and thirsty land.

Where, then, is this much injured and insulted people to read or to hear those moral precepts necessary to guide their conduct and controul their actions? Are they to resort to their pastors for instruction, upon the *extent* and *nature* of moral obligation\*; and if so, what moral code do they use and possess? Is it a human or a Divine one, or does it partake of both?—If Divine, is the whole Decalogue, the laws of the two tables, or Ten Commandments, as delivered from the sacred Mount, together with the hopes and sanctions of the new dispensation, given to their flocks, *pure* and *unadulterated*, without *subtraction*, *addition*, or *substitution*?

If not, where are they to learn their duty, either to God or man? How are they to become part of the true Catholic Church, “without spot or wrinkle?” Or where are they to learn the properties of an Oath, or the duties which it prescribes?

If such, then, is their unhappy state, crime may be *involuntary*, though punishment will be *certain*.

\* Vide the Examination of Dr. Poynter, and other pastors of the Church of Rome, before a Committee of the House of Commons, appointed to inquire into the state of education amongst the children of the poor in the metropolis, as detailed in the Morning Chronicle, Aug. 21, 1816.



The sanctions of the laws may, through ignorance, be thought *vindictive*; whilst, in *fact*, they are salutary and remedial.

Trained up under the rigid discipline of unrelenting authority, they carry with them the slavish principles of fear into every action they perform. They submit to temporal authority, from an inability to oppose it, more than from a conviction of the security it affords, or of the privileges it conveys: in fine, licentiousness is called liberty, and slavery obedience; for—to use the language of one whose *unvarnished* patriotism has been amply displayed, by his unwearied exertions in the cause of suffering humanity, by rescuing millions of his fellow-mortals from the fangs of commercial avarice\*, as also by his individual exertions, and joint co-operation in endeavouring to spread the blessings of Gospel Salvation to the remotest corners of the earth—"it is in morals, as in physics, unless the source of practical principles be elevated, it will be in vain to attempt to make them flow on a high level in their future course†."

It may be urged by their Clergy, that any process whatever, used or applied for the purpose of defining or restricting the spiritual authority of the Church, would be arbitrary and *inquisitorial*.

\* It is unnecessary to state, that the Abolition of the Slave Trade is alluded to.

† Wilberforce's *Practical View of Christianity*, p. 302.

Why, it might be asked, should not every description of Dissenters from the Church Establishment be subjected to similar inquiry?

I answer, There exists no reason, founded in truth and justice, to exempt them from such a trial; and I am satisfied to allow the opinions of all other associations to be rigidly examined by the Legislature, in order to discover, whether such societies profess any doctrines, or acknowledge any authority, by their implicit obedience, to which the peace and security of the State could, by the acquisition of political power, possibly be endangered; but I can readily forgive those sallies of honest indignation at the term "inquisition" being even once named amongst us; and perhaps, it would be difficult to calculate to what a climax such indignation might arise, if so *unhallowed* a tribunal as "The Holy Office," should ever desolate and devour us.

But it may be further urged, that inquiry is now unnecessary, as such an investigation was made by the House of Commons into Catholic opinions and principles as silenced clamour and dispelled scepticism.

Have not, say they, interrogatories, drawn by legislative wisdom, and framed with peculiar accuracy, been submitted to the enlightened Universities of Salamanca, of Louvain, and of Paris?

And have not such answers been respectively returned, as confirmed the validity of our title to

all the privileges of the State, even in the opinion of our adversaries?

True, such answers were returned as then appeared satisfactory; but, on the same principle that Catholics conceive subsequent Parliaments are not bound by the acts of their predecessors, wherever the necessity of alteration is so great and imminent, that the security of the State requires its immediate adoption; on the very same principle, the present or any future Parliament, would *not* be concluded by the *acts* or opinions of preceding Parliaments, if *such* were, on mature reflection, considered as endangering that security which all have a right to possess and are entitled to enjoy. However, I object to the answers of these respective *Universities* so submitted to Parliament, on two irresistible grounds.

First, that the best evidence was not produced; and secondly, that the evidence furnished proceeded from an incompetent authority.

In estimating the nature of primary evidence, we discover its qualities by its effects. That evidence is alone primary which is conclusive on the subject-matter to be investigated and discussed.

The answers returned to the questions submitted for consideration (supposing, but not admitting, the competency of the respective tribunals) were *unsatisfactory* and *inconclusive*, as their truth or falsehood could not be determined by the

parties to whom such answers were returned, neither by the inspection of original records, nor by the personal examination of those by whom such negative declarations were supplied. And the authorities were *incompetent*; inasmuch as the opinions of individuals, or of separate communities, could *not* be *obligatory*, not possessing powers to enforce obedience to their respective decisions, recognized and accredited as the supreme authority of the Church.

And, really, when we consider the æra of its spiritual jurisdiction in the seventh, and of its temporal jurisdiction in the eighth, century; and when we reflect, that its decrees have varied in their effects and operations in the exact ratio of its temporal jurisdiction being enlarged or contracted;—on a review of such a nature, though the claim of ecclesiastical authority is now systematically suppressed, yet let the greatest philanthropist, or the most enlightened philosopher, that exists, declare, if he can, that refusal is illiberality, and concession wisdom.

It may be said, that times are changed, and that danger has ceased. True, times are changed; but where is the evidence that principles have changed also? If such facts were unequivocally established, a wise policy, following events and not weakly anticipating consequences, should conform to them. But let it be clearly understood, that the exercise of such a sound discretion,

even under the most auspicious circumstances, must ever be restrained within those boundaries which the Constitution plainly demarcates. The supreme power of Parliament cannot be directly denied; yet it will not derogate from its constitutional authority to declare, that the performance of some acts would exceed those limits beyond which Parliament has *virtually* and *wisely*, though not *expressly*, admitted that legislative discretion *cannot* extend. If the repeal of Magna Charta and of the Bill of Rights, &c. would be of this description, is not the Act of Supremacy to be considered as a constitutional charter; and, if so, can it be paralysed in one part of these realms and efficient only in the other? For, though the Act of Supremacy will not be formally repealed, yet it may be virtually abrogated, whenever political power is conferred without reference to the conditions which such Act or Charter expressly stipulates and requires.

*Privileges are rewards for superior merit or achievements, not boons to avert danger, or to procure attachment.* To boast of loyalty, would be just as reasonable as to boast of common honesty. Protection demands the one; the law compels the other, or punishes the deviation as a crime.

If we continue our reflections on the more extended consequences of infallibility—viz. obedience without doubt or examination—how various are its ramifications, how inveterate its

evils! It may be asked, Are not the members of other religious associations liable to error and to crime, as exemplified in the daily transactions of this checkered scene? Granted. Such is the melancholy truth, which we may deplore, but cannot deny. Nay, I will even admit, that in some places, and on peculiar and trying occasions, the conduct of the "Catholic" population has been often exemplary, where their pastors have used vigilance to discover, and activity to restrain, plans in prospective, but not sufficiently matured to be consummated by crime.

But truly, my Lord, Catholics (in the restricted meaning which "the Church" affixes to the term) labour under a superinduced evil, added to those of our common nature; viz. that the supreme authority of the church, as the *effect* of its assumed infallibility, is employed in reducing its votaries to one general standard—unqualified obedience; thus preventing them, even though the object to be obtained was just and legitimate, from looking up to or exploring any higher source, whose sanctions might deter or whose hopes could console them.

If, then, such a negative calm, or neutralized existence (for better it cannot be called), can only be expected under the most auspicious circumstances, where is security to be found when the objects are unjust and the means illegitimate?

Other religious associations, though ignorant

often of the plainest truths; though as a flock sometimes undiscoverable by their pastors, and seldom roused or awakened by their exertions or example; yet, labouring under no foreign or extrinsic pressure (exclusive of the heavy burdens of our common nature, sin and infirmity), yet, not bound down with iron hand to the belief of dogmas as contradictory as irrational; the Magistrate, or the State, has only to contend with a population labouring under a *natural*, not a foreign or extrinsic pressure, which may either be restrained by law or removed by the illumination of Divine Truth,—as they can have access always to this invaluable *treasure*, free and unrestrained by any human authority, whenever the sting of conscience awakens or alarms them.

On what principle, then, of reason or equity, can the Catholic Bishops and Pastors of Ireland declare, as they have declared, that they inculcate the purest morality, as well as the most stedfast loyalty\*? Must not the purest morality flow from the purest source? And what other can it be, but “the word of Eternal Life,” the sacred Scriptures, pure and unadulterated? Yet the Scriptures, being “sensed and characterized” by “the Church,” are, through the same *infallible* conductors, conveyed to the People; and thus, perhaps, the purest morality, as well as the most stedfast loyalty, is

\* Vide a Letter to Sir John Cox Hippesley, entitled “The Inquisition,” in which these assertions may be found.

enforced and inculcated. Certainly, as the stream cannot rise higher than the level of the source from whence it flows, it must be confessed, that the nature of their loyalty will not be inferior to the purity of their morality.

But it will be urged, that these remarks are severe and illiberal, as they cast reflections on our fellow-subjects highly injurious to their civil and religious characters. True; I admit the severity, but lament the cause. Why should any individual or society consider such remarks severe, if able to disprove their *general* existence? What is that whining and deceptive liberality which cries, "Peace, peace," where there is no peace\*. Forbid it, Heaven! that any narrow or contracted principles should ever so controul and paralyze my heart, as to diminish my ardent anxiety for the temporal and eternal happiness of my country. Far be it from me to deny that genuine patriotism and true religion is to be found among the members of every religious association. Truth is not the exclusive property of sect or party: it is the undoubted property of all to whom its glad tidings have extended, over which no human laws have any just controul: but it must be first possessed, before it can by possibility be enjoyed. Many, doubtless, are to be found, who exercise their reason on the word of Eternal Life, and bring

\* Jeremiah vi. 14.



their conscience and conduct to this unerring standard, regardless of the smiles or frowns of an opposing world. My assertions, *proved by experience*, are general and well founded: if they are denied, I challenge inquiry, and defy disproof. Those persons, therefore, that, on due reflection, are conscious such remarks are not applicable to them, will freely admit the truth of what is now advanced, as they will be unassailable by a severity which was neither intended for nor capable to reach or to disturb them; and they will find no difficulty in discovering my only aim and object—viz. to remedy the abuse, not to punish the offender.

To the regularity of Catholic attendance at their places of general worship, I give my unqualified assent: it merits respect, and should excite imitation.

To some of its pastors I can give my tribute of sincere gratitude, for their successful exertions in tranquillizing the agitated and distempered mind, when, in many places, exertions were too successfully made to irritate and to inflame it. That the peace and security of many districts in Ireland is chiefly, if not solely, to be attributed to the vigilance and exertions of some of the Catholic priesthood, cannot be disputed. Their loyal conduct has, on certain occasions, received public and merited approbation. Yet reflection on these facts furnishes this irresistible inference ;

viz. that the power and influence which can, almost with talismanic effect, cause violence to cease and passion to subside, can also “ride on the whirlwind and direct the storm.” With these facts before us—as unquestioned, I believe, as they are truly unquestionable—the policy by which the wishes of the Petitioners could be identified with the *true* interests of the State cannot be of an ordinary character, as its difficulty must increase with that reflection which such a subject imperiously demands; the more so, as matter of an extraneous nature was introduced into the discussion of this important question.

I allude to the proposal of investing the Crown with the exercise of a prohibitory power (denominated a Veto) over the nomination of Catholic Bishops; against the exercise of which a protest has been entered by the Catholic Hierarchy, as the result of their opposition to the Oath of Supremacy\*; and though its discussion has produced much ingenious casuistry, yet it hath afforded no real or permanent advantage.

The simple fact of discussion *alone*, admits *more* than could possibly be intended. It admits the right of foreign interference with the internal affairs of these realms; though such right is to this period disavowed, and negatived by the records of Parliament.

\* Vide Appendix.

I allude to the Statutes of Premunire and Provisors, the productions of a Catholic Parliament, passed at successive periods, "when darkness covered the earth and gross darkness the people;" when their legislative efforts to recover light and liberty rendered the moral devastation that surrounded them more peculiarly discernible.

Then, these realms were purely "Catholic." Great, indeed, must Papal oppression and extortion have been, to rouse and to excite correspondent resistance; but it was made, as the last resource of a mere animal nature sinking under the weight of a merciless despotism, proclaiming their wrongs and impeaching the authority by which they were inflicted.

And really, my Lord, the wisdom of our ancestors will not appear doubtful or equivocal, when we reflect on the provision Bull of Boniface VIII. successor to Pope Cælestine, "prohibiting *all Princes* from levying, without his consent, any taxes upon the Clergy, and all *Clergymen* from submitting to such impositions—threatening each with the penalty of excommunication in case of disobedience."

When a demand, therefore, was made by Edward the First on the Clergy, they took shelter under the Bull of Boniface, saying, by their Primate, Robert de Whinchelsey, "that the Clergy owed

obedience to two sovereigns, their spiritual and their temporal; but their duty bound them to a much stricter attachment to the former than to the latter: they could not comply with his commands, in contradiction to the express commands of the Sovereign Pontiff \*.”

The passions of pity and of anger will, I doubt not, be alternately excited against me for such an obsolete quotation. Pity will be bestowed on my bigotry, and anger on my presumed malice. Yet I will strive to serve my country, more anxious to confer real benefits than deterred by such *unmerited favours*.

I must, therefore, request the Catholics of Ireland to recollect, that obedience to the authority of the Church partakes of an immortal nature; as we have been informed by two Right Reverend Divines †, that the doctrines of the “Catholic Church are the same in *all ages* and in *all countries*, equally *obligatory* and *unchangeable*.”

They must, therefore, violate the first principles of Catholic unity to presume that the nature of spiritual obedience since the reign of Edward the First could possibly suffer any diminution. The power of requisition may be abated, but the principle of obedience remains *unimpeached*. Any

\* Heming, vol. i. p. 107, quoted in Hume's History of England, vol. ii. p. 521.

† Vide Dr. Troy's Pastoral Letter in 1793; also Dr. Hussey's in 1797.

attempt, therefore, to obtain power and privilege, by conceding Episcopal nomination to the election of the Irish Priesthood, would equally violate the policy of the laws and the spirit of the Constitution\*.

“But the power to injure has ceased,” says one of the “Catholic” advocates. Another says, “that Papal assurance has been plighted; that concession to the ‘Catholics,’ will be followed by Catholic loyalty and by Catholic obedience.”

The inference, however, to be deduced from non-compliance is neither mysterious nor incomprehensible. Certainly the acquisition of so much loyalty by such means must be highly gratifying to the Legislature, as hopes might be entertained that the gift would be accompanied with the apostolic benediction.

Does Legislation consist more in gratifying propensities, than in conferring permanent and essential benefits? Is it because Papal power has ceased, and that the probability of its revival does not at present exist, that its germ or seed might not silently strike deep its roots, and at a more propitious season unfold its branches? Is it because the power has ceased that the right of exercising such power should be *expressly* acknowledged? Is Catholic inability to be pleaded as a qualification to office and emolument? Or is the original

\* This observation applies to domestic nomination only, whilst spiritual supremacy continues to be acknowledged.

foundation of Papal authority disclaimed or revoked?

A celebrated Statesman, the late Henry Flood, now numbered with the illustrious dead, was not satisfied, on the discussion of a great national question, with a "simple repeal:"—nothing *less* would satisfy his patriot mind than "an *actual renunciation*" of the right of another country, to make laws that were obligatory on his native land.

Is, then, Papal power to be recognized *now*, when the State is Protestant, though disowned and repudiated by a Popish Legislature?

Is it liberality to confirm, in this *enlightened* age, what even ignorance could not endure?

Will it for a moment be insinuated or asserted, that the writer, who is anxious all should enjoy the high privileges of the Gospel and the blessings of enlightened freedom, indirectly advocates persecution and endeavours to violate conscience? If there be any to be found who can entertain such opinions, they claim his undissembled pity, when he considers that "even-handed Justice returns the ingredients of the poisoned chalice to their own lips."

But to return—Nothing appears plainer or more decisive to my mind, than that the Veto question should never have been discussed; as its extent and consequences, I am satisfied, were not duly appreciated.

It must be conceded, that society can only then

be secure when all its members enjoy their religious opinions free and unrestrained, yet in such a way that neither the security of the State nor the rights of the Crown, intended for the benefit of the People, should be infringed or invaded.

If the King is considered as the Supreme Magistrate, invested with prerogatives, recognized by the Laws, which can neither be *virtually* paralysed nor directly resisted; it follows, though he neither can nor ought to interfere with the internal regulations of any religious society, yet the exemption to which each is entitled arises from a presumption that its doctrines are consistent with civil security, and also that no foreign or extrinsic authority is exercised (under pretence of a transmitted or Divine right) over such sect or denomination of Christians, derogatory of or in opposition to those undoubted prerogatives which, agreeable to the spirit of the Constitution, are as beneficial as they ought to be uncontrouled.

I shall therefore, without reference to the Veto, advert to the objections that may probably be raised against the *direct* exercise of the prerogative by the nomination of "Catholic" Bishops.

And here, my Lord, as the objection to the Oath of Supremacy on *Catholic* principles cannot be sustained, neither can *direct* nomination by the Crown on similar principles be legitimately resisted.

The difficulty to be met seems to consist in this; viz. that the Clergy of Ireland (who now acknow-

ledge as head of their Church a foreign and unauthorised authority) possess no Ecclesiastical Establishment, though exercising in their respective dioceses episcopal, and in parishes subordinate jurisdiction, which are respectively denominated by the very names then known when Ireland was blessed with only “one religion,” but subsequent to that period when it was emphatically termed the “Island of Saints.”

And surely, my Lord, it is worthy of inquiry to ascertain who was head of the Church of these realms when the memorable Statutes of Premunire and Provisors were passed. Was the King, by the completion of such enactments, exercising an assumed or legitimate authority? Will not a right exist though its exercise has been suspended? On what principles of reason or of justice, is a title by prescription to be urged and pleaded in favour of Catholic claims; and those rights of the Crown, inherent and “*sui juris*,” and so recognized by the laws, to be opposed or resisted—the exercise of a prerogative by which *protection* would be conferred—not power arbitrarily inflicted or selfishly enjoyed?

Let us then recur to the 26th year of the reign of Henry VIII.\*, when that impetuous but decided character, however sensual his object or base his motives (it avails not), threw off the

\* Statute 26th of Henry VIII. chap. i. Anno Domini 1534. Hume's History of England, p. 406.



Papal chains, and became the instrument, under an over-ruling Providence, of rescuing these realms from an ignominious bondage. He was proclaimed, by Parliamentary Enactment, in its restricted sense, Head of the Church; not thereby acquiring any new right, but giving operation to a suspended prerogative, the exercise of which many of his predecessors, at different periods, either tamely surrendered or were by violence and intrigue derived or dispossessed.

Were not the ceremonials and doctrines of that assumed authority observed and inculcated, with little alteration, during his entire reign?—nay, even, was not the same Henry, against whom the thunders of the church were hurled, and by which he was declared an apostate from the true faith, previously rewarded with the title of Defender of the Faith\* for his defence of the seven sacraments?

It is peculiarly remarkable, that, thirteen years after this publication, and *previous* to the passing of the Act of Supremacy, the two Houses of Convocation had voted (to use the language of the historian) “that the Bishop of Rome had, by the

\* This title was given by Leo the Tenth to Henry the Eighth for his Defence of the Seven Sacraments, impeaching Luther's Doctrine; and published in 1521, in consequence of Luther's attack upon the writings of Thomas Aquinas, who supported the doctrine of indulgences, and was the King's favourite author Hume's History of England, vol. iv. p. 291.

law of God, no more jurisdiction in England than any foreign bishop; and that the authority which he and his predecessors had there exercised was only by usurpation and the sufferance of English Princes. Four persons alone opposed this vote in the Lower House, and one doubted. It passed unanimously in the Upper. The Bishops went so far in their complaisance, that they took out new commissions from the Crown, in which all their spiritual and episcopal authority was expressly affirmed to be derived ultimately from the civil magistrate, and to be entirely dependent on his good pleasure\*."

It must be admitted that Henry's religious principles were not *contaminated* with heresy during this long and eventful period; and though he denied the supremacy of the Pope, as an *original usurpation*, yet his zeal for the propagation of the faith cannot be questioned, if actions are the best criterions of sincerity.

The statute passed towards the conclusion of his reign†, commonly called the Law of the Six Articles, is a precious specimen of his chymic powers, by which "the faith" is *purified* from that alloy which *previously* accompanied it. The articles are these, viz. "The doctrine of the real presence; the communion in one kind; the per-

\* Vide Collier's Ecclesiastical History, vol. ii. cited in Hume's History of England, vol. iv. pp. 403, 404.

† 31st Henry VIII. chap. xiv. Hume, vol. iv. p. 505.

petual obligation of vows of chastity; the utility of private masses; the celibacy of the clergy; and, the necessity of auricular confession."

These, with the addition of five supernumerary sacraments, form such a body of Divinity as proves, better than any argument with which I am acquainted, the nature of that "infallibility" which, in the plenitude of its wisdom, had previously entitled him "The Defender of the Faith."

The first of these articles has been used only in *desperate* cases, where it has been formerly found more efficient to *silence* inquiry, than to *enforce* conviction.

The other articles have their appropriate uses, and amply entitle the *pious* Henry to another mark of distinction, "an active labourer in the spiritual vineyard."

I apprehend enough has been stated and proved to separate *Catholicity* from *Papal Supremacy*, as well as from its consequence, "infallibility;" yet that, still, *denial*, as the only alternative, will be substituted for *disproval*, I am prepared to believe. However, it will enable me to meet with better hopes of success the multiplied objections that may be raised against me. Yet, if Catholics could as dispassionately reflect on the nature and tendency of this address, as each individual would, in common transactions, appreciate his private and respective interests, where

prejudice could find no quarter; where reason must be exerted to protect them; then my motives and my objects would appear clear and unequivocal, and they would consider me as their *true* friend, to whom they ought, and would *necessarily* extend their most zealous co-operation.

Though nomination of Catholic Bishops by the Crown, cannot appear on any established principle as objectionable, or even imposing; yet as prejudice increases in proportion as reason is subservient to authority, I must, therefore, proceed with increased caution, and anticipate the inevitable consequences which must follow, either of two distinct propositions, which I may most *prophetically* assume.

The Catholic Bishops and Clergy of Ireland will accept of a provision and support from the State, *or* they will not.

In the former case, they will not cease to be *Catholics*, but will, by their acceptance of such provision, give evidence of Catholicity that cannot be impeached; and then the right of nomination, by virtue of the Prerogative of the Crown, will necessarily attach on each episcopal vacancy or demise, and thus constitutional prerogative will be legitimately restored and directly exercised.

In the latter, the prerogative will be exercised by inflicting on any of the subjects of these realms the penalties of those violated statutes,

which were *defensively* framed, to prevent the exercise of a foreign jurisdiction (under any pretence) in those countries where constitutional liberty ought to be felt and enjoyed.

I will attempt an illustration of these respective propositions. The policy of accepting a provision or support from the State is as evident as the authority by which Episcopal nomination would be exercised is clear and incontestable. It has been proved *negatively*, from Scripture; and *presumptively*, by inference deducible from it. As no quotation can be made from the New Testament, restricting or controuling the exercise of such a power by the supreme Magistrate; and, therefore, *where no restriction is, there discretion must exist.*

The latter proposes no new penalties, but only adverts to the consequences of refusal, as the spirit in which such enactments were made is as applicable to foreign interference *now* (whether spiritual or not) as it was at the respective periods when such acts were confirmed; otherwise I may fairly presume, that the advocates of what is vainly called Catholic Emancipation, would have used the greatest exertions to procure their repeal.

Let us then illustrate by example, the principle of constitutional nomination, and afterwards consider the advantages inseparable from its adoption.

No doubt can, I believe, be entertained, as to

the actual exercise of power, in the nomination to vacant Bishopricks, by the respective sovereigns of Russia, Prussia, Silesia, and Poland, though they hold a profession of faith different from that of the Church of Rome.

But it is said, that the King of these realms cannot nominate to Catholic Bishopricks, because by the Act of Nomination, he must give testimony in the name of the "Catholic Church," to the sacerdotal merits of the Episcopal candidate; and that the King cannot, consequently, nominate, he not being a *Catholic* (in the restricted sense in which such term is used), and, therefore, *incompetent* to declare his orthodoxy in the true Catholic Faith, which implies, that his Majesty would acknowledge such faith to be true, and himself a member of it \*.

How much is error indebted to subtilty, for its growth and confirmation! Would the respective potentates of those countries to which I have alluded undergo or submit to such discipline? Do they not respectively nominate to vacant Catholic Bishopricks *directly*, without licence or controul? The fact of direct nomination by the head of the State, differing in religious profession from those on whom such power is exercised, cannot be expressly denied, but will be *circuitously* attempted. It may, perhaps be said, that in those countries,

\* See a Pamphlet entitled "The Inquisition." Dub. 1816. p. 6.

a species of gratuitous Veto is conceded, by which no person objected to by the Sovereign would, from motives of respect, be returned as a fit person to the Pope, to be invested with Episcopal authority; as the Pope, in the fulness of his apostolic condescension, always confirms such choice as is exclusively made by those respective potentates, freely and without reserve. Can it possibly be conceived, that the Legislature of a country, where liberty is secured by equal laws, and power cannot be indefinite, is so prostrate and degraded, that it could submit to the discussion of such a question as this; viz. "Whether the King of these realms should be indebted to the discretion and liberality of the Pope of Rome, for the qualified exercise of a prerogative inalienable from, and appertaining to, the Crown, in its most unrestricted sense, *independent of any foreign jurisdiction or controul?*" And, though the examples of Russia, Prussia, Silesia, and Poland are recorded illustrations of the exercise of prerogative, in its most extended application; yet it is an unquestionable fact, that the King of these realms nominated *directly* to the Bishoprick of Quebec\*, and that *here* the right the Crown (exclusive of such examples) to the direct exercise of this disputed prerogative, is to be traced to the elementary principles of protec-

\* Evidence of this fact was some years ago officially laid before a Committee of the House of Commons, by the Under Secretary for the Colonial Department.

tion and allegiance, identifying by their immediate and inseparable union, the rights of the Crown, with the security and happiness of the people.

Will it be urged, that in those countries just mentioned, their respective sovereigns exercise a precarious prerogative in their nomination to Catholic Bishopricks? Is it by a commission from the Pope that such power is exercised? And if so, what is the phrascology of such commission? Is it "*Durante bene placito*," or "*quamdiu sese bene gesserint*?" Are they slaves or sovereigns? If the Pope had an indefeasible title to such a nomination, why not produce it? Is his mind so wrapped up in heavenly contemplation, as not to cast a solitary glance upon this nether world, and, by so doing, preserve the patrimony of St. Peter? Or, perhaps, what is less equivocal, may he not be unable to produce any title, and with peculiar address, endeavour to effect by management what, in more pious times, he could have achieved by authority?

But let me suppose the direct nomination to an episcopal Bishoprick, of a person disapproved by the Pope, where the sovereign (not professing the same faith with the person nominated) could not attest the sacerdotal qualities of the episcopal nominee, could the Pope (under such circumstances) prevent his investiture, or disturb his enjoyment, if satisfied to hold such bishoprick with-



out papal confirmation? Or will it be contended, that by such opposition he would cease to be *truly Catholic*? If the answer is in the affirmative (though its truth is virtually disproved by the fact of royal nomination, in the countries to which I have alluded), yet such answer must not depend upon theological data, nor upon the *qualifications* of the nominator or nominee, not being conformable to an arbitrary and assumed standard: it must be regulated by, and proceed from, clear and decided proof *within the power* of the party against whom it is adduced, and cognizable only by a competent tribunal.

If the party claiming the exercise of spiritual or temporal jurisdiction (in a country where the laws of the realm do not recognize his authority) is permitted to determine the question of right, *not* on evidence examinable by the sovereign whose authority is thus attempted to be violated, but on the arbitrary assumption of rights which were never established. If assertions are to become assurances of the highest nature, and credulity is to supply the deficiencies which justice demands; then, indeed, security is a chimera *the moment that power accompanies usurpation*. The *forms* of justice may, however, be complied with, for the party thus becomes a witness *in his own cause*; considers *duly his own evidence*, and infallibly determines *in his own favour*, from whose righteous decision there must be no appeal!

Would the Catholics of Ireland affix any value to the Constitution (the honours and privileges of which are so fondly anticipated), if the more valuable rights of life, liberty, and property were to be *similarly* determined? Is reason, man's peculiar property, to be abused, and his consolations and his hopes to hang upon the decision of frail and interested man? Is the Apostle Peter to be referred to, as the Rock upon which their church is built, and yet are his injunctions and warnings to be disregarded when he thus assures every Christian believer, after having described the character and manners of false teachers? "While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage\*." Let me finish this deformed but just portrait, by submitting to your candour and matured reflection one impressive question: Can men at the same moment be spiritually *slaves* and *civilly freemen*?

This address, I fear, must necessarily be prolix, and sometimes contain repetitions, as I can anticipate the various appearances which subtilty may assume, and the distinctions which casuistry can discover; as it may yet be objected that, supposing, but not admitting, the truth of what is here advanced, yet still that the situation of the Catholics in Russia, Prussia, Silesia, and Poland,

\* 2 Peter ii. 19.

are very dissimilar to that of the Catholics of Ireland, inasmuch as in these countries, the Catholic Bishopricks are richly endowed, but that in Ireland (as I previously admitted) the Clergy can with unfeigned grief, declare that their episcopal or parochial situations are not endowed with a single shilling\*.

The fact is true. My reasoning, however, proceeded only on the assumption of my first proposition; viz. that the Catholic Clergy would accept of a provision and support from the Government of this country; for it is only on the event of such contingency, that direct nomination could be exerted. If, then, such a proposal should be accepted, the benefits to our common country and to the true "Catholic Church" would be great and incalculable, as it would destroy the wretched feuds and unholy jealousies which ambition (under the pretence of political oppression) has often too successfully excited, in that unhappy land, where the persons summoned to redress their grievances (by opposing the legitimate empire of the laws) were, at the very moment of such appeal, *mere patients*, submitting, without murmur or complaint, to the far more galling yoke of spiritual tyranny; and thus an admission of the King's Supremacy (on true Catholic principles) would give unity to power and efficacy to allegiance: it would destroy the possibility of disputes with

\* See also "Inquisition," before quoted, p. 8.

respect to the limits of contending jurisdictions, which the State is *now* anxious, under its anomalous circumstances, to demarcate and ascertain, but which the infallibility of the Church considers more expedient to confound.

If, however, the Clergy of Ireland will not accept this amicable and conciliatory proposal, then experience proves, and policy suggests, the actual necessity of preventing the nomination, and consequent confirmation, of Catholic Bishops in Ireland, and of every species of spiritual jurisdiction by any foreign power not recognized by the laws of these realms. Perhaps I cannot better enforce the motives for compliance, or appreciate the injuries that the Clergy of Ireland will inflict upon their abused country by their rejection of the proposal contained in my first proposition, than by briefly detailing the rise and progress of the Papal power, with its consequent effects, past and present, wherever such power has been, or continues to be, exercised.

In the latter end of the sixth century, Gregory the First was content with the title of Bishop of Rome; and never fancied, even in imagination, the title of Œcumenical or Universal Bishop, which soon afterwards was illegally assumed and unjustly acquired. Gregory, though tenacious of the rights of the Church and anxious to extend them, never aspired to the unparalleled usurpation which was unhappily realized; for on the

Patriarch of Constantinople assuming the title of Universal Bishop, Gregory writ to him in his capacity of Bishop of Rome, beyond which his jurisdiction did not extend, reprobating such pride and presumption, and declaring, that any bishop who assumed so blasphemous a title could only do so in the spirit of Antichrist. And yet we may discover that this moderate and pastoral conduct, as observed by Gregory, was rejected by his successors; for Boniface III. engaged the Emperor Phocas, the murderer of Mauritius, to deprive the Bishop of Constantinople of the title of Œcumenical or Universal Bishop, and to confer it upon the Roman Pontiff, at which time the title "Pope," by way of eminence, was also applied to the Bishop of Rome.—This happened early in the seventh century; and, to complete this pious work, the temporal was afterwards superadded to the spiritual authority\*.

The sentiments of St. Cyprian, expressed *considerably prior* to this memorable apostacy, deserve peculiar attention. When writing concerning the unity of the Church, he says; "There is *one* Bishop, of whom every bishop holds a share: for as there are many beams in the Sun, yet the brightness is but one; many branches in a tree, several streams from a fountain: in like manner

\* Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, Vol. ii.; History of Popery, Vol. ii. p. 5.; Abr. Limborch's History of the Inquisition, p. 39.

the church is but one, which being illuminated by the brightness of our Lord, who extends his beams throughout all the world, yet nevertheless the clarity is but one, to wit, Jesus Christ \*."

Unhallowed ambition, however, attained its proposed object; for, in the middle of the eighth century, Pepin, first Mayor of the Palace to Childeric the Third, King of France, in which capacity he exercised the royal Authority, aspired to the Title of majesty also, and formed a plan to dethrone his Sovereign; but being advised by the States, whom he assembled in 751, to consult the Roman Pontiff as to the legality of his pretensions, he sent an embassy to Zachary (then Pope), to know, "whether the Divine Law did not permit a valiant and warlike people to dethrone an indolent and incapable prince, and to substitute in his place one more worthy to exercise royal authority?" Zachary stood in need at that time of Pepin's assistance against the Greeks and Lombards, and returned an answer favourable to the Usurper's wishes; who, of course, ascended the throne of his master and sovereign without the least opposition. Stephen the Third, the successor of Zachary, being still disturbed by Astulfus, King of the Lombards, went to France, in 754, to implore fresh succours of Pepin, and there confirmed the decision of his predecessor, dissolved the obligation of the oath of fidelity and

\* Cyprian, de Simplicitate Prelatorum.

allegiance which Pepin had sworn to Childeric, and anointed and crowned him a second time; for which condescension the Pope was rewarded with the Exarchate of Ravenna and its dependencies, recovered, by the arms of Pepin, from Astulfus, which since that period have been annexed to the patrimony of *St. Peter* \*.

Surely the imposition by which Divinity is so impiously annexed to the Papal power, in opposition to reason, and in defiance of Scriptural and historic evidence, must have been long since detected, had not men, through force of early prejudice, and willing to be deceived, imbibed the poison of this “pious fraud,” producing a moral torpor and a mental blindness.

Let us, however, attempt the analysis of this unqualified despotism. Those barbarous and savage nations who had, during the darkness of Paganism, submitted to the mysterious authority of their Chief Druid or High Priest, transferred, on their conversion to Christianity, the same devoted allegiance to the Bishop of Rome, who was well versed in the art of rendering this natural delusion, under the semblance of religion, subservient to the fixed and determinate purpose of acquiring an universal temporal authority, which was afterwards, from the extreme ignorance of the Laity, during some centuries, firmly established. If we reflect on the insensible transition from Pagan-

\* Soerates, Eccles. Hist. b. vii. c. 20.

ism to Christianity as then professed and practised—the senses fully gratified, but the heart left barren and uncultivated—the period of time in which the temporal authority of the Church of Rome was felt and endured by the nations of Europe may excite deep and awful reflections on the wisdom of a mysterious Providence: but, reasoning on human principles, it may be regarded with diminished surprise. Oppression necessarily produces fear, and ever suggests temporary expedients, which policy, founded on justice, would detect and disclaim. The simplicity of the feudal system, transplanted by the Conquerors of Europe from their desarts into those regions which once had been the peculiar and appropriate residence of civilization and the arts, was gradually corrupted; and instead of the protectors, they became the oppressors of their numerous vassals: and the latter, uninfluenced by that respectful allegiance which such protection could alone produce, evinced turbulent and disaffected sentiments; but their masters and proprietors (as they conceived themselves to be), anxious to preserve their power and controul over those who were first injured, and then betrayed, weakly expected to achieve by unwarrantable concession, a security which no temporizing policy could effect, whilst the claims of justice remained unsatisfied; and as the Clergy had then acquired a controuling ascendancy over the human mind, those princes judged it expedient to invest them with ample



donations, in order to suppress, through their influence, the mutinous spirit of their subjects; reserving, however, to themselves the supreme dominion, and the military services of their respective vassals. Besides, such was the absence of all moral feelings at that period, that the value of those donations were enhanced by the conviction that such liberality was not wasted on a profligate or rapacious priesthood, but dedicated solely to the "Church of Christ!" Whether the means were productive of the end, the impartial voice of history is alone competent to proclaim, as it too plainly discovers how confidence was abused, and the temporal authority of "the Church," united with spiritual influence, exercised against her benefactors.

The sentiments of a celebrated and impartial historian appears peculiarly apposite on the present subject.

"The genius of the Papal Government, however, was better adapted to the exercise of spiritual dominion than of temporal power. With respect to the former, all its maxims were steady and invariable. Every new Pontiff adopted the plan of his predecessor. By education and habit, Ecclesiastics were so formed that the character of the individual was sunk in the profession, and the passions of the man were sacrificed to the interest and honour of the order. The hands which held the reins of administration might change, but the spirit which conducted them was always the

same. While the measures of other Governments fluctuated, and the objects at which they aimed varied, the Church kept one end in view ; and to this unrelaxing constancy of pursuit it was indebted for its success in the boldest attempts ever made by human ambition \*."

It would far exceed the limits of this address to detail the various acts of oppression inflicted on the respective Sovereigns and States of Europe, during the plenitude of the Papal power. I shall mention only one, but that a memorable instance of insatiable ambition.

Henry the Fourth, successor of Charlemagne, and justly styled "the Great," was the first Potentate who attempted to oppose the formidable power of the Roman Pontiff, by the defence of his undoubted prerogatives, against the invasion of the aspiring Hildebrand (Gregory VII.), who then usurped the right, by the exercise of investiture of ecclesiastics with benefices in his, the Emperor's, dominions. This opposition exasperated Gregory to such a degree, as to excommunicate Henry for contumacy, declaring him unworthy of the imperial dignity, and absolving his subjects from their oaths of allegiance.

He excited the Princes of Germany to resist him ; and this great and virtuous sovereign saw himself at once deserted by his subjects, and the princes of the empire arrayed in arms against him, and, to complete all, his own family (in vio-

\* Robertson's Charles V. vol. i. p. 155.

lation of every principle of nature and affection) successfully instigated to conspiracy and resistance! Thus situated, what could the unhappy Sovereign effect? The Successor of Charlemagne suffered for a defence, which it would be *criminal* to decline. Henry was compelled to submit, and amidst the rigours of a severe winter, travelled to Italy, and arrived at the Pope's residence, (Canosa, where he then was), and remained, by compulsion, during three successive days, before the gates of the Papal palace, enduring all the severities of hunger and cold: at length, on submitting to the hard and oppressive terms of this "holy tyrant," he was dismissed and comforted with his *apostolic* absolution\*.

Upon this awful and memorable event many reflections are irresistibly excited. It may, however, be sufficient to say, that doctrines, though contrary to reason and religion, issued by an authority *that cannot err*, will never be expressly avowed where they cannot be *directly* enforced, because such avowal would be evidence of their prior existence; and *then* the hope of acquiring power and privilege must be as visionary as it is certain that even the shadow of infallibility must vanish away, as those doctrines can alone be *infallible* which are as *immutable* as they are *eternal*, and as *uniformly efficient* as they are truly *salutary*. But "liberality" may be assumed where power is

\* Rob. chap. v. vol. i. p. 211. Annal. German, ap. Struv. i. p. 325.

paralyzed; though improvement must be stationary where error is considered as impossible.

What were the principles of temporal allegiance then inculcated by the Church of Rome? If the Church is infallible, *now* its doctrines must be still the same; containing the standard of that allegiance to be rendered, according to existing circumstances, to temporal sovereigns, which "the Church" is alone qualified to explain and to enforce.

The original Oath of Allegiance, or of *Obedience*, as then denominated, requires much consideration to assist our inquiries. It may not be irrelevant to review the sentiments of the Prince in whose reign it was then moulded, and under whose auspices it was enacted.

The First James will, I apprehend, be considered as disinterested authority on this subject. His sentiments are well known, and clearly given by the historian of that memorable period. He is described as the friend of Catholics, but the enemy of Papists. He is stated to have declared, in his first speech to his Parliament, "that his faith was the true ancient Catholic and Apostolic Faith, grounded upon the Scriptures, and the express word of God\*." And he anxiously\* endeavours to vindicate the character of the Catholics from the suspicion of being concerned in a foul and horrid conspiracy, which was then so lately and successfully

\* Rapin's History of England, vol. ix. p. 252.

*anticipated and prevented, by declaring that such meditated and intended crime could neither originate from nor be perpetrated by Catholics, but by Papists only; and, under the impression of fear and apprehension of future danger, and in order, if possible, to avert it, was the Oath of Allegiance produced and brought into operation.*

What, then, in truth and in fact, was this celebrated Oath, and what were its recitals? It was intended *prospectively*, as a pledge of future loyalty and obedience, illustrated in the declaration of the reigning prince being the lawful king of these realms, and rendering such pledge a more valid species of assurance, by *negating* the rights, and thereby *virtually* admitting the existence, of papal usurpations previously exercised over these realms.

Such is its plain and obvious meaning, and so it was then understood, as will incontestably appear by a Bull of Pope Urban the Eighth, dated Oct. 31, 1606: "*That he forbid the subjects of England to take such Oath, giving them thereby plainly to understand that by so doing they forfeited all hopes of salvation\*.*"

It appears, also, that the celebrated Bellarmine supported with his great but perverted talents this Papal manifesto; which produced King James's Apology†, addressed to all the Princes of

\* Vide Rapin, vol. ix. p. 287.

† Ibid. p. 283; in which is given this document from King James's Works, p. 253.

Europe, in which he magnifies his clemency to the "Papists," after his discovery of that plot and conspiracy, in which he considered them as plainly implicated: and though in such Apology the King clearly shews that Bellarmine confounded the Oath of Allegiance with the Act of Supremacy, yet I am satisfied that the negative clauses in the former were *virtual*, though not *express*, confessions, or recognitions, of all the prerogative rights previously recognized, and subsequently vested in the Crown by the Act of Supremacy; and that the Oath of Allegiance was intended to render the recurrence of such violations of prerogative impracticable in future—for the admission of, and not the Oath of Supremacy, was then only required, except on the acceptance of any place of office or emolument.

The Act of Supremacy was a declaration of the original and legitimate rights of the Crown. The title assumed by Henry, as revived and restored by Parliament, by which, on Catholic principles, he was declared head of the Church, agreeably to my former definition, was not impeached or disputed, though the national religion remained unchanged during the whole course of his reign; and if we advert to a remarkable period of it, when the decision of the two Houses of Convocation was made, as before stated, previous to the passing of the Act of Supremacy, we shall obtain full possession of the national sentiment on the subject of supremacy at that period, con-

clusively expressed through the medium of accredited organs,—the two Houses of the Clergy in *Convocation duly assembled: and if we are to estimate their sincerity by their performance, such decision becomes irresistible evidence of national opinion.*

The objection to the Oath of Allegiance did not proceed from the people, but from a *foreign and unauthorised* authority. The rights of the Crown were acknowledged and enforced (with the exception of Mary's bigotted and sanguinary reign) for nearly sixty years.

The Bull of Pope Urban VIII. though professing hostility against the Oath of Allegiance, and denouncing, *in the plenitude of its mercy*, against those who accepted it, a forfeiture of all hopes of salvation, yet was, in fact, an indirect attack upon the Act of Supremacy, by which the demolition of Papal authority, spiritual and temporal, was in England long since achieved and completed.

Allegiance, subordinate or contingent, was never inconsistent with Papal policy. Some bond of union, descriptive of the reciprocal duties of King and People, was conceded as necessary, and its formalities were not resisted.

The morality of the act performed by the individual who binds himself, by an oath, to perform the duties prescribed at the time by the obligation to which he is a party, may be unimpeachable; yet conscience might be satisfied, when

allegiance would be insecure: the *person* is not arraigned—the measure *only* is investigated.

Pope Urban's Bull would not have been issued in vain, its threats would be most religiously accomplished, allegiance dissolved, and regal supremacy become no longer valuable, had not the Clergy taught a lesson fatal to his unprincipled ambition; viz. "*That the Bishop of Rome had, by the law of God, no more jurisdiction in England than any foreign Bishop; and that the authority which he and his predecessors had there exercised was only by usurpation and the sufferance of English Princes\*.*"

The exercise of any spiritual jurisdiction, directly or indirectly, by any foreign power, would militate against the *letter* and *spirit* of this decision, as much if the Clergy were *unendowed*, as if they were *highly beneficed*: for even, as the Clergy of Ireland are now situated, without provision or establishment, no foreign Bishop (distinct from and unauthorised by the Pope of Rome) could, agreeable to their present discipline, exercise any spiritual jurisdiction in Ireland; so neither ought the Pope or Bishop of Rome exercise any *spiritual* jurisdiction beyond the limits of his own diocese, as no sanction founded on the law of God (which is truly spiritual) can be adduced to justify the exercise of such foreign jurisdiction.

But it may with truth be asserted by the

\* Vide Hume's History of England, vol. iv. p. 403, 401, with the authorities there cited, as before quoted.



Clergy of Ireland, that the Act of an English Convocation could not be conclusive on those who were not parties thereto. That such decision was not conclusive is an awful fact that must be conceded, as the doctrine *therein* contained has 'been *practically disproved in Ireland*. The Act of Supremacy, however, was, two years after its enactment by the English Legislature, also passed into a law by an Irish Parliament; but it must be confessed, that, such were the prejudices reason had, in that distracted land, to contend with, that the benefits of an enlarged policy could not then be extended to her, nor the blessings of the Reformation otherwise dealt out than in small and scanty portions.

If such a decision was, then, made (previous to the existence of the Act of Supremacy) by the Clergy of England, did they, by such decision, cease to be Catholics, though they then professed to believe all those doctrines which the Church of Rome has declared ever since to be Catholic and unchangeable? That spiritual supremacy is essential to the support of Popery, must be admitted; but that "Catholicity" should depend upon the belief of such a doctrine, exceeds the powers of my faculties to comprehend; for by such concession, "Catholics," so called by the Roman vocabulary, will in vain attempt to deduce a title from St. Peter, who styles himself only "an Apostle of Jesus Christ," but they must be satisfied to rely on a more modern title, and assume as their

common stock or ancestor Boniface the Third, of *pious memory*, by whom the claim of spiritual supremacy was first arrogated and usurped. If the term "*Catholic*" is considered respectable, and that of "*Papist*" reproachful, why is the authority acknowledged by which the propriety of the latter term is established? If the authority of "*the Church*" is to negative and controul the decisions of their own brethren; and if also the operation of the Act of Supremacy, which the members of the same Catholic faith confirmed in England, is to be evaded or resisted in Ireland, then truly Religion, Heaven's best gift to man, is converted into a curse; and it will neither require the gift of prophecy to anticipate, nor is it a breach of Christian charity to pronounce, what reason proves and experience has confirmed, that where allegiance is *divided* security must be *conditional*.

The Oath of Allegiance, as now required to be taken, is a profession of *true* allegiance to his Majesty George III. by the party to whom such obligation is tendered, according to its plain and obvious meaning, without reserve or equivocation. Allegiance is a duty arising from protection, and therefore demandable *of right* from the party to whom it extends. Is the term "*protection*" arbitrary—subject to the caprice of the individual who, meditating on the violation of his allegiance, might thus take advantage of his own wrong, and, by assuming that the former was withdrawn, attempt to justify crime by the infraction of the

latter? Protection is not a *specific* against *actual* inquiry, but only a *remedy* by which the injured party can, under the auspices of the laws, receive support and compensation. What I before stated, relative to the original Oaths of Supremacy and Allégiance, was not confined to the *letter* of these statutes, but applied to their *spirit* and *substance*, as indicative of the sentiments of that supreme power by which they were enjoined.

The present statutes of Supremacy and Allegiance, by which they were repealed, contain *no* recitals diminishing or qualifying the extent or nature of those duties which the original Oaths of Supremacy and Allegiance plainly prescribe: the former is a qualification to office and authority; the latter a demand by the state on those who enjoy its protection, and payable by such parties *ex debito justitiæ*. The present Oath of Supremacy does not (in terms) consist in an *actual* declaration that the King of these realms is supreme head of the Church; but it consists in an *express* declaration “that no foreign prince, person, prelate, state, or potentate, hath, or ought to have, any jurisdiction, power, superiority, pre-eminence, or authority, ecclesiastical or spiritual, within this realm.” And as to the present Oath of Allegiance, it embraces all the duties which the 3d of James the First detailed, in this comprehensive obligation:—“I, A.B., do sincerely promise and swear that I will be faithful and bear *true* allegiance to his Majesty George III.”

*Is not this Oath also to be taken in animus proponentis?* And if so, what can *true* allegiance to the Sovereign mean? Must it not consist in an express acknowledgment of the powers with which he is entrusted by the Constitution, and in a decided obedience to those laws, civil and ecclesiastical, by which he is sworn to rule his conduct and to govern his subjects? If the Canons and Constitutions of the Court of Rome are not inconsistent with these obligations, the difficulty of taking and observing them ceases. If they *are inconsistent* with such obligations, how is fidelity to be rendered, or *true* allegiance to be secured and performed?

Perhaps, my Lord, the state of Ireland may be justly considered as *unique* and *isolated*.

*There*, the exercise of foreign usurpation has been at successive periods peculiarly remarkable; and as the Catholics of Ireland are gratified by any reference to a remote period, in order to establish the antiquity of their religion, I will refer them to an unimpeached authority, by which its antiquity will be ascertained and established, and by which the force of that profound question, "Where was your religion before Luther?" can never be applied to them, as they may satisfactorily refer to an anterior period of nearly three hundred and fifty years for its introduction and establishment.

I allude to the memorable Bull of Pope Adrian

the Third, by which he made a grant of the kingdom of Ireland to his beloved son, Henry II., King of England, as his vassal; authorising him to enlarge the borders of his spiritual kingdom, by planting therein the true Catholic faith; styling him his dear son in Christ; and directing him to levy the sum of one penny upon each and every house, as belonging to St. Peter, and consequently to him as his representative; and, in the true spirit of meekness, calling upon his faithful followers, as active and zealous missionaries, to propagate the true faith by the *most persuasive arguments*\*.

The policy of this commission may be *sound*, but its morality is not *catholic*. The wisdom of the serpent is more conspicuous than the harmlessness of the dove. Our great Master paid tribute, but did not receive any; and in propagating the *only true catholic faith*, the weapons he used were *spiritual*, and not carnal.

Without inquiring into the state of religious knowledge previous to that period, it is sufficient for my present purpose to assert, what requires no proof beyond what will be adduced, that the Bull of Adrian III. ascertains the period previous to which neither the doctrine nor authority of the Church of Rome was known or recognized in Ireland. And though the remains of some pagan superstitions

\* Hume's History of England, vol. ii. p. 76; M. Paris, p. 67; Gerald. Cambria. Spelm. Con. vol. ii. p. 51, there cited; also Leland's Ireland, vol. i. p. 8.

were to be found among them, yet they did not acknowledge the authority of any human power, as controuling their reason or binding and enslaving their consciences, until a Synod was held at Cashel, in the year 1171, when “the holy Roman Catholic Religion” was, for the first time, proclaimed as the national religion of Ireland: for though it was partially introduced about twenty years before, its *blessings* were not secured until the period of this National Proclamation \*. These facts are historically true; and though they may, agreeably to established custom, be denied

\* It is true, in the year 1152 the Papal power had so far operated by its emissaries on the fears and weaknesses of the Irish Clergy, as to induce them to submit to an innovation, introduced by Cardinal Paparon, who was admitted into Ireland as the Pope’s Legate at this period; when four Palls were received from the Pope, by the Prelates of Armagh, Dublin, Cashel, and Tuam; the celibacy of the Clergy enforced; and the celebration of Easter according to the Romish decisions first adjusted. This was the introduction of Papal supremacy, which was finally established at the Synod of Cashel before-mentioned.—Leland’s History of Ireland, vol. i. pp. 6, 7.—It may be necessary to observe, that when Henry landed at Waterford, which was in October 1172, being seven years subsequent to Adrian’s Bull of Investiture in 1165, he came, *not* to conquer, but to take possession of Ireland as a grant from the Pope, and to treat as rebels those who should oppose his authority, having previously obtained from Pope Alexander a confirmation of such grant so made to him by Adrian his predecessor. — Leland’s History of Ireland, vol. i. p. 71; Placit’s Corona, 4th of Edward II., in Turr. Birming.; also, Leland’s History of Ireland, vol. i. p. 89, with the authorities there cited.

(because they cannot be disproved by authority equal to that by which they are supported), yet they are important to be known, as bearing directly on the policy or impolicy of granting or withholding those privileges which are now required and solicited.

It is an indisputable fact, that Ireland was the *last* country in Europe that submitted to Papal usurpation. Hence we may infer that his "image and superscription" is now so clear and legible as to bid comparative defiance to the injuries of time.

It is not at present necessary to state the means by which "the old and true religion" (as it is called) has attained such unenvied perfection as at present exists in Spain and Portugal, and is now achieved, though not yet secured, in France. I allude to those countries only where it is tolerated, not established; and amongst these Ireland is most conspicuous.

*There*, an hierarchy exists complete in all its parts, requiring nothing but power, superadded to unquestioned zeal, to enable it to attain the perfection of which it is clearly susceptible.

*There*, communication with the Papal See is immediate and direct, and therefore the rays of its illumination are not diverted from its destined course\*.

\* It is stated in Dr. Troy's Pastoral Letter, that a Board of Cardinals is specially appointed at Rome, to manage the ecclesiastical affairs of Ireland.

In England, *no* hierarchy exists, *no* episcopal denominations. *There*, its principles, *deep* not *loud*, advance with silent but increasing progress, exciting no present jealousy, nor provoking to fresh aggressions.

In Ireland, the Catholics numerically exceed the Protestants (including Sectarists), as about three to one; and to a superficial observer, their claims, rather than petitions, would demand immediate and complete redress.

We are arrived at such a crisis that policy as well as justice requires this question to be decided—not by vague and abstract reasoning, not by what prejudice has engendered or faction matured—but by a recurrence to what experience confirms and reason approves. Its decision cannot be *local* or *restricted*, but must involve in its consequences the safety of every state which considers the happiness of man as the primary object of its association, an *identity* of interests, connected with a reciprocity of protection, as essential to its welfare and real security. The principles, therefore, contained in this address, must ever remain equally interesting and impressive, in whatever manner the issue of this important question may be decided.

It will not be gravely contended, by any man who believes in the truth of Divine Revelation, that it was never intended as the rule of his actions and the foundation of his hopes; neither will it be denied, that it is as essential to national



security and prosperity as to individual happiness. These truths (abstractedly) will be readily conceded: it may be useful to know, why, in their application to moral and social purposes, they should be so variant and contradictory.

My mind (with truth I can declare it) revives past scenes of shame and degradation to our abused country, as a painful but imperious duty, which I am called on to perform — where the sacred name of Religion (abused and insulted) was professed, not practised; and where the excess of temporal authority (even though capable of proof) ought never to be pleaded, either to justify or palliate the atrocities which such scenes represented. But though slightly glancing at those awful and impressive lessons which error taught and crime consummated, let not the true *Catholic* disgrace his Christian profession by relaxing the exercise of “that charity” which “suffereth long and is kind;” but rather let him draw within the sphere of his active benevolence and constraining love each and every deluded and benighted brother, and evince that his preservation as an individual, and that of the state as a community, can alone be effected by discovering the nature and consequences of that moral disease which, though it reaches not the *animal*, yet pervades and paralyzes the *whole man*.

But, my Lord, the toleration of error, and its confirmation *by power confided and privilege bestowed*, are widely different.

If, as it must be conceded, religion is essentially connected with present security and future happiness, it follows, that the authority on which it is founded must be *Divine* ; and that any association of men, acknowledging as their spiritual head or master a created being, as the representative on earth of an Uncreated One, must make such profession, and hold such faith, on a full and clear conviction that such title is deducible from that record *alone* which Christ and his Apostles delivered to mankind as fully "sufficient to make them wise unto salvation." And if the commission, by virtue of which such Divine authority is assumed, cannot be expressly discovered by an inspection of such record, it then *irresistibly* follows, that the decrees issuing from such an unfounded authority must be as pernicious to the individual who obeys them, as dangerous to the security of that state where they are enjoined; because, if it is criminal to fabricate a human title by which property, fleeting and precarious, can only be lost or endangered; how much more incalculably criminal must it be, not only to impose (as Divine) a fictitious title on mankind, but also to compel an admission of its authenticity without doubt or examination, and thus to reduce the entire devotion of its victims to the prompt obedience of its perverted will!

Whenever our rights as men or citizens are invaded, we generally appeal to those fixed and recorded charters of our liberties, as the tests or

criteria by which our injuries are to be redressed and our rights confirmed; and we feel no difficulty in abiding by such decisions, because our opinions must then be brought to and abide by what the charter strictly enjoins and specifically prescribes.

We feel, however, no alarm for the consequences, conscious as we are that such charters were not only declaratory of our rights, but prescribed the means of their preservation. Our murmurs cease; the folly and presumption of vague and fantastic opinions are heard no more; and we listen, with a species of reverential awe, to the responses of such oracular wisdom.

Have not the Catholics of Ireland referred to them, either as titles under which they claim, or as enactments under which they suffer? Are not Magna Charta, Bill of Rights, Habeas Corpus, and Act of Settlement, of the former; and the statement of the Penal Laws, in which those penal enactments are pathetically bewailed and minutely specified, of the latter description?—the one containing proofs of what they enjoy, connected with the hopes of what they expect; the other containing a long and black catalogue of penalties, which it is stated they still endure for the benefit of their *ungrateful* country.

If such are indisputable facts, is it not necessary that those who uphold infallibility, and the state in which such doctrines are preached and prac-

tised, should endeavour to discover its nature and pretensions, in order that its advocates might be enabled to prove how far the implicit belief of, and obedience to it, can be considered as a “reasonable service;” and that the State might appreciate, if any, and what the proportion of power should be conferred on Catholics, in order to strengthen the security which we now enjoy.

The morality of the Gospel is also *politically* valuable, for its purity and immutability; and those Charters to which I have referred are valuable only, as far as they partake (however imperfectly) of these essential qualities.

Will Catholics, then, appeal with confidence to the productions of imperfect man, “whose breath is in his nostrils;” not resting satisfied, until they possess and examine them, in order to secure temporal and precarious enjoyment; and yet place implicit trust and confidence in the declarations of sinners arrogating to themselves the attributes of Omnipotence, by the assumption of “infallibility,” without either producing their title or permitting its validity to be questioned or investigated by those who, it seems, are to possess reason only to disfigure and debase it? If such is their unhappy condition, it appears to me incomprehensible, how men can be anxious to enjoy privileges, and to boast of freedom, whilst they are submitting (*unconsciously*, which makes their situation more deplorable,) to the most ig-

ominious bondage, compared with which the utmost rigour of the Penal Laws was liberty approaching to licentiousness.

It is with awe and veneration I attempt to give my crude and imperfect opinions on the nature of those high attributes which are as *infinite* and *immutable* as their *great* and *Eternal Cause*; but it requires more than ordinary forbearance to restrain those feelings which the *frantic* assumption of them necessarily excite.

The term “infallibility” is not in *words* to be found among the Divine attributes; but if we are permitted to reason by analogy, we must suppose it to be *an emanation of that Divine Wisdom which is as perfect in holiness, as infinite in knowledge; as impervious to error, as incapable of communicating it; as infinite in mercy and abundant in goodness; as inflexible in justice, and immutable and eternal in his decrees; containing, but not contained;—the great Jehovah, eternal, and for ever!*—possessing attributes of so high and transcendent a character, and so far beyond the conception of the most exalted intelligences, as they are incommunicable to man, and impossible to be sustained by him. Nay, the very suggestion of such daring impiety (as even to conceive the remote possibility of such communication) to the mind not completely in captivity to the wiles of Satan, must prostrate it in horror and abasement; as it would be as devoid of true philosophy as of pure religion.

This is a subject, to feel the importance of which is a high privilege, to attempt to discuss it arrogance and presumption; and yet those high attributes which I have faintly attempted to portray, all centre and unite in that great Being, by the perfect union of which, in the fullness of the eternal Godhead, Infallibility alone exists!

Where, then, is the creature or creatures assuming, either collectively or individually, the prerogatives of Omnipotence?

To the decrees of a Pope and Council, we are told, this Divine attribute of Infallibility is annexed. I will not descend to notice petty quibbles, or perverted quotations, which the advocates of this Anti-catholic doctrine are compelled to resort to; as I am satisfied enough has been said to prove that infallibility, as claimed by a creature, never did, or could have existed—being the incommunicable property of *Him* “whose glory he will not give to another,” or permit a worm of its native earth to continue, with impunity, to raise itself in open rebellion against the Majesty of his all-sufficient power.

But, alas! were I, for a moment, to try this boasted infallibility by the criterion of such incommunicable attributes, (by supposing, but by no means admitting,) the possibility of such communication, could infallibility be proved from the uniformity and consistency of its decrees, as successively published by the Acts of Councils?

Would each appear as conspicuous for purity and holiness, as the engrafted and eternal word which Heaven, in its mercy, gave to fallen and polluted man? Are its decrees so uniform and consistent; each so illustrative of the other, and of the respective truths which they ought to disclose, as clearly to appear to be drawn from that pure fountain of living waters—the holy Scriptures? Are they so clear and perspicuous, so perfectly agreeable to Eternal Truth, as to challenge investigation and defy inquiry? Are its decrees free from human device or human invention; or do they not “teach for doctrines the commandments of men, thereby making the word of God of none effect, by their traditions?” Or is the Church of Rome satisfied to rest the issue of its infallibility upon the *strict* and *undeviating* conformity of its doctrines to the holy Scriptures of the New Testament, without addition or substitution?

If such is the criterion by which her usurpation is examinable, then, indeed, “the infallibility of the Church” (a delusion hitherto permitted by an all-wise and good Being, for great but inscrutable purposes,) will expire, and light and liberty again animate and illumine this “dreary void;” for, if any one given truth can be more certain than another, it is this; viz. that Divine authority can *alone* be proved, by the express warrant and authority of the word of Truth. And here it is necessary to observe, that no document, posterior

to the original record, can be admitted to give a colourable authority under the presumption of a preceding grant not therein contained; as the production of the paramount title negatives any presumption which the non-production of it might otherwise afford;—therefore, such attempts as these must not only prove abortive, but when the standard of Truth is, at length, fully unfurled, confusion and dismay will then be visible among the ranks of its present most inveterate enemies.

If, then, enough has been advanced to disprove and detect such impious pretensions, it follows, that the exercise of power founded thereon is truly *crimen læsæ majestatis*—treason against the King of kings—exceeding in magnitude that offered to an earthly potentate, in the proportion of a drop of water to the boundless ocean, and in a descending series comparatively injurious to the peace and security of society.

When we consider the wanton abuses of temporal authority which have ever accompanied arbitrary power, and the excesses which its exercise, even under the restraints of constitutional controul, have too often produced; what are we to conceive, and where are we to expect security, if power should ever be vested in *one* or *many*, (equally subject to the infirmities of a corrupt nature) who assume an authority, under the pretence of a Divine title over two worlds—the present and the future? And even where power does



not actually exist, cannot influence, when necessary, supply its place, and ultimately achieve its purposes?

If this is not conceded, delusion must supercede reason; and hope, under the specious form of "liberality," be substituted in the place of experience.

It is true, that such are the discordant materials of which this creature, "man," is composed; that though obsequious and obedient to his pastor, where religion is the cause, or made the instrument to produce such obedience, yet the Catholic will sometimes act contrary to his directions, and follow the suggestions of his local and immediate interests, perhaps, even if exchange, barter, or sale should take place between them. The currency of his pastor's coin, or the authenticity of his paper, might be questioned by this *unbelieving* vassal; but on the cry of alarm being given "that his religion was in danger," his implicit faith in the "infallibility of the Church" instantly returns; and her decrees and admonitions, conveyed to him by his spiritual confessor, are received as the immutable and unerring doctrines of Omnipotence!

This is a true portrait, faithful as a *general* likeness; feebly, yet chastely drawn.

The past and present state of Ireland is peculiar and distressing, over which humanity must drop a tear, and the patriot statesman, where

such is to be found, stand terrified and appalled. —New schemes of legislation may, as they have done, alternately succeed each other; but if the principles of national morality are not deeply laid, and fully impressed, from that record which alone can explain how “righteousness exalteth a nation,” it will be in vain to indulge in specious theories or fantastic hopes.

If imperfect man is to legislate for his fellow-mortals, “let him become a fool in order to be truly wise.” If opinion generally regulates national security, that state must be most stable, and its population most happy, where man is *morally* free; — where he has chiefly to contend against himself, and by the assistance of a pure morality, drawn from its legitimate fountain, endeavours, with Divine assistance, to achieve a victory, for which the Record encourages him to hope, by those means which are graciously prescribed to effect it.

Thus, and only thus, enabling him to fulfil the two great and paramount duties of his existence; his duty towards his God, and also to his neighbour; in which the duty of temporal allegiance, together with all other social and relative duties, may justly be considered as included.

It may not be improper to observe, that though the pastoral labours of the Catholic Priesthood of Ireland have been great and persevering, and though they have been “instant in season, and

out of season;" yet, that in common with others, "having done all, they are still unprofitable servants;" and though the purity of their morality and the steadfastness of their loyalty may not be of an ordinary description, yet, that the truth of their assertions must be measured by the morality of their flocks, and by the knowledge they have acquired of those principles on which morality and loyalty can alone be founded; "for by their fruits shall ye know them."

And here I wish to guard against error and misconception. I feel no desire to draw any comparison between their *pious* labours and those of others: and even if I did, in one instance their superiority must be admitted; viz. such zeal in the cause as sets competition at defiance.

"To do the state some service," by discovering evils, and tracing them to their cause; by upholding truth, and by dispelling error; will afford to my mind much higher consolation than all that ill-gotten wealth can procure, or modern profligacy attempt to grasp at.

"I do not mean to pass any eulogium on the zeal of the Established Church: it certainly is not of an *ostentatious* nature. Our Clergy do not boast of the purity of their morality, but of the purity of the source from whence it flows; and as to their loyalty, though it may not bear any comparison with that of the Catholic Priesthood, yet it acquires some respect from the safe though nega-

tive qualities it possesses; as the dignitaries and highly beneficed Pastors of the Established Church, enjoying its tranquil slumbers, will not easily be awakened to indulge in abstract speculations upon the principles of the Constitution as compared with the practice of Government, but will properly enforce the necessity of obedience to the higher powers.

The impossibility of serving two masters, God and mammon, has been briefly adverted to—its effects have been felt, and its consequences deplored;—yet it may be, as it has been urged, that temporary violations of the laws in Ireland arise from the oppressions or mistaken policy of a weak or vicious Government, and not from any other cause whatsoever.

Without attempting to deny what, as a general proposition, I am neither able nor willing to disprove; viz. that the best practical administration of every government is productive of the most salutary effects; and without adverting to the various legislative enactments that have been *vainly* adopted to tranquillize and improve a country dear to me even in her degradation; yet, if the memory of facts was to be obliterated, and I was to argue from a supposititious case—viz. that, since the alleged violation of the Articles of Limerick, the Catholics of Ireland, returning good for evil, evinced one uniform course of loyalty and obedience—I would necessarily impute such

distinguished conduct to two causes: first, to their full conviction of that *supreme* allegiance which they owed and ought to render to God *alone*, as their paramount and indispensable duty; as also to their knowledge of, and acquaintance with, the nature of that temporal but undivided allegiance, which they ought to render to the chief magistrate of the state: and, secondly, to the pastoral instructions of their Clergy enforcing the necessity of these respective duties, and proving their obligations to observe and perform them on the *unerring* authority of the Word of Life, as also on the principles of *unsophisticated* reason.

Let us, then, endeavour more minutely to appreciate the value of these imperative duties, by inquiring into the state of their existence and the manner of their performance. In order to shew how impossible it is for those who acknowledge the supreme magistrate of the state as head of the church, to confound temporal with spiritual obedience (exclusive of the broad distinction recognized by Scripture), I will previously refer to our present Ecclesiastical Constitution, as far only as is necessary for the elucidation of my present subject.

It is not, therefore, necessary to enter into any historical detail of the progress of the Canon Law in England; suffice it to say, that, on a review of the Canons, or Ecclesiastical Constitutions, by

which the Established Church of these realms is governed, two points, truly material, are established: first, that the Common Law was paramount and controuling; second, that the Canon Law was liable to be restricted and confined within prescribed limits, whenever its operations interfered with the jurisdiction or invaded the boundaries of the Common Law;—yet that such Canons, under the sanction of legislative authority, were rendered *clear* and *definite*; their respective jurisdictions being *concurrent*, not *repugnant* or *contradictory*: for if ever a question of jurisdiction should arise on which an exercise of authority should be claimed by the Ecclesiastical Court not expressly recognized in the provisions and enactments of those respective Canons, in these and all such cases the ecclesiastical authority must yield obedience to the judgment of a court possessing temporal jurisdiction\*.

The King, as chief magistrate and head of the church (in its restricted sense), is the person entrusted by the supreme power of the State with the administration and execution of those Laws;

\* The Stat. 25 Hen. VIII. c. 19, which restrains the Convocation from making or putting in execution any Canons repugnant to the King's Prerogative, or the Laws, Customs, and Statutes of these Realms, was merely declaratory of the old Common Law, 12 Rep. 72; that part of it only being new, which makes the Royal Assent actually necessary to the validity of every Canon. Vid. 1 Bla. Com. (by Christian), p. 279.

which he performs through the instrumentality of judicial and ministerial officers.

It may, perhaps, be objected, that the Protestant Layman may be as generally ignorant of the boundaries between the civil and ecclesiastical jurisdictions which he acknowledges, as the Catholic can possibly be of the spiritual jurisdiction of the Church of Rome. If such were the fact, the conclusion would still be immaterial. The question is, not what is the information either may *possess*, but what is the *certainty* which both may *acquire*?

The Catholic is informed by his Pastor that the Church of Rome *alone* possesses spiritual jurisdiction, to which he must render implicit obedience, without knowing in what it consists or how far it extends; but the Protestant, however ignorant, knows and acknowledges an ecclesiastical jurisdiction to which he can resort either for redress or information. He can discover that such jurisdiction is neither *mysterious* nor *indefinite*, but an integral part of that Constitution over which the King, as the chief magistrate in church and state, presides, and to whom he has sworn an *undivided* allegiance.

If a member of the Catholic faith becomes entitled to a bequest under a will, which must be first duly proved and authenticated by the authority of the Ecclesiastical Court, such means will be then used as are requisite to entitle him

to demand and to receive it ; and to that court he will bend his course for redress, and partake of the benefit of that jurisdiction, the authority of which he is instructed to disavow ; thus, *virtually*, though not *intentionally*, acknowledging the King as head of the church (in its true Catholic sense), by submitting to the ecclesiastical jurisdiction over which he presides.

It may, however, be objected, that such acquiescence cannot be considered as submission to an ecclesiastical authority, not being recognized by the Church of Rome.

I confess myself a bad casuist, as I am not fertile in making distinctions, one of which is certainly more conspicuous for its sophistry than its morality ; viz. that it is *competent* to a Catholic to accept the redress such jurisdiction affords, but that he is *incompetent* to admit the authority by which its penalties may be enforced and inflicted.

The hierarchy of Ireland must consider the ecclesiastical jurisdiction exercised in these realms in two points of view—either as a jurisdiction exercised over what is merely temporal, with the assumed and inappropriate terms of “ecclesiastical and spiritual” affixed to it ; or they must regard it as a jurisdiction taking cognizance of those things which are purely “spiritual,” but derived from an usurped and illegitimate authority.

If they entertain the former opinion, their dif-



faculties cease and determine. The precedent condition to be performed will be then complied with, and power and privilege be no longer incompatible with national security; as the Oath of Supremacy which will then be taken prescribes no rule of faith, but only requires the admission of the King's supremacy so far as is required to give efficacy to the decrees of those ecclesiastical jurisdictions over which he presides, and by which, agreeably to such an opinion, no spiritual cognizance was ever exercised.

The entire allegiance of the subject will be thus identified with the real interests of the State; the Catholic will be rescued from the penalties of a jurisdiction, *foreign, arbitrary, and indefinite*; and finally restored to the exercise of his moral and intellectual powers, by the due exercise of which he can alone become either a loyal subject or an enlightened Christian.

If, however, the latter is the real opinion which at present obtains; defence, not power or privilege, becomes policy, *because it will be justice*.

If the term "spiritual" is now to be understood in so extended a signification as when the Papal power was in its greatest altitude, between the seventh and the twelfth centuries, *then indeed* it may be difficult to discover where the term "temporal," from which it is contradistinguished, is to be found, as it was *then* obsolete, if not actually extinguished. *Then, truly*, all things were

“spiritual,” all came] within the comprehensive grasp of this assumed apostolic power.

Various circumstances then combined to uphold the age of ignorance, and consequently to increase the influence and permanence of Papal authority. One fact claims our peculiar attention. It is, therefore, material to observe, that the Romans wrote their books either on parchment, or on paper made of the Egyptian Papyrus — the latter, being the cheapest, was of course generally used; — but to complete this “moral void,” in the seventh century the victorious arms of Saladin in the East destroyed a branch of commerce—viz. the sale of the latter article — which had previously existed between that country and the inhabitants of Italy, as well as of other parts of Europe, for many centuries, by which the facility of communicating knowledge was considerably advanced. After this calamitous event, they were compelled to write their books upon parchment; and as its price was high, books became rare and of great value. We may estimate the scarcity of the materials for writing them from one circumstance, that there are yet extant manuscripts of the eighth, ninth, and following centuries, written on parchment from which some previous writing had been effaced in order to substitute thereon some new composition: so that the classic labours of a Horace, a Tacitus, or a Livy, might be expunged, to make

room for the miracles of a saint or for the ravings of pretended inspiration\*.

The blessings of this "spiritual" jurisdiction were *felt* and *acknowledged*, in England, from an early period of our history; in Ireland, only after the Synod of Cashel, 1171, when the holy Roman Catholic Religion was proclaimed as the national religion of Ireland, as before mentioned.

At length the comprehensive wisdom of an overruling Providence began gradually to unfold. Acting through the operations of moral causes, He made use of appropriate instruments to fulfil the high destinies and to effectuate the gracious purposes of His irresistible will.

The art of printing was first discovered in Europe about the middle of the fifteenth century. The scattered rays of intellectual light which were faintly twinkling in this awful and surrounding gloom, were, through the medium of the press, concentrated into one common focus; and being thus reflected in an extended direction, and with an increased velocity, first dissipated and then illumined.

Many other conspiring causes could also be adduced, to evince and prove the progress of the mind, from servile fear and degrading superstition, to the enjoyment of its elementary faculties of reason and reflection, by which it was enabled

\*Rob. chap. 5. vol. i. pp. 21, 22, and 280. Murat. Antiq. Ital. vol. iii. p. 828.

to survey the abyss from whence it had been raised, and the elevation of which it was farther susceptible.

After many struggles for power in England and in various nations of Europe, this once formidable power, before which the nations of the earth were prostrate and obeisant, which “held their kings in chains and their rulers in fetters of iron,” was at length compelled to negotiate where it could not enforce—to restore where it could not retain—and to surrender assumed rights where it could not exert them; still displaying its usual policy, by declaring that such were *voluntary* acts, the overflowings of apostolic benevolence to her dear sons, whose temporal and eternal welfare were the peculiar objects of her superintending vigilance.

At length, after the Papal authority was abolished in England, when Henry the Eighth was (in its restricted and catholic sense) declared head of the church—by which title he acquired no new right, but abolished an old usurpation—his successor, the Sixth Edward, ascended the throne, who being under the age, specified by his royal father’s will, for personally assuming the reigns of government, the management of the state was entrusted to a Regency specially appointed for that purpose.

It may be here objected, and not without reason and justice to support it, that the Reformers,

who were the professed enemies of persecution (as being directly opposite to the mild spirit of the Gospel), should not disprove their doctrine by their actions.

True; but the purity of the doctrine upon which the Reformation rests, remains unimpeached, however criminal individual agents may possibly be.

It must be admitted, that Calvin in Switzerland, and other conspicuous advocates of the Reformation in England, did at this period lose sight of their Christian profession, so far as to abet persecution even unto death, and thereby offend against that charity they were called upon to promote: and though the victims of Papal persecution were, for the three preceding centuries, as numerous as the sands of the sea, compared with the few individuals who at this time suffered from the perverted zeal of some of the Reformers; yet that the persecution even of a single individual is deeply to be deplored, and unequivocally condemned—that previous crime should deter, not provoke imitation. However, they proved, only what ought to be known, though perhaps reluctantly admitted, “that the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.” But let it be remembered that these persecutions were the remains of *that old anti-catholic leaven*, which, after the continuance of many centuries, it was not reasonable to expect could have been entirely purged

away ; but that the spirit and principles of the Reformation were directly adverse to persecution, is a position that solicits scrupulous investigation, and defies the possibility of disproof.

Were the persecutions of the Waldenses and Albigenses in Piedmont and Savoy; the massacre of Paris on the Feast of St. Bartholomew; the establishment of the “ holy ” Inquisition in Spain, under the auspices of the canonized and “ pious ” Dominic; or the persecutions of the Wickliffeites in England, occasioned only by the furious zeal of a few distempered individuals, and not expressly sanctioned by the Church of Rome, but in direct opposition to her apostolic decisions? \*

What was the situation of persecuted Europe, when Cromwell (however great his guilt or his hypocrisy in other respects might possibly be) wrote letters by his Secretary, the celebrated Milton, to the different powers of Europe, soliciting their aid and co-operation against the sanguinary persecutions of unhallowed Crusaders, then employed in the holy work of extermination under the express authority of the Church of Rome? †

Nay, farther, the same Cromwell levied subscriptions both in London and Westminster, to

\* Concil. apud Binium, tom. vii. p. 608 ; Idem, tom. xi. pp. 148, 149; Histoire Général de Languedoc ; Thuanus, lib. lxiii. sect. 14. Vide also Stat. Hen. IV. De Hæretico Comburendo.

† Vide Dr. Symmons’s Life of Milton ; Morland’s History of Piedmont ; Jones’s Waldenses, vol. ii. pp. 343—371.

the amount of 37,000*l.* and sent the same, together with the subscriptions of the other cities and towns of England, to accredited agents on the Continent, for the aid and relief of those who survived their pitiless and unrelenting fury.

If the warning voice of history does not attest these facts, then let reprobation justly fall upon its appropriate object.

These painful truths would not be brought to the reader's recollection, which ought to be consigned to oblivion, if such crimes were deprecated and condemned, though sanctioned even by infallibility itself, and not palliated or justified on the principles of policy or self-defence (which even could not be attempted without arbitrarily assuming an aggression on the part of these unoffending Christians\*, of which they were physically incapable), to justify such anti-Christian persecution.

If principles, therefore, had changed as much as the power had afterwards abated, I would not now be reduced to the necessity of performing this distressing but indispensable duty. Besides, I did anticipate, that, if the reign of Edward VI. was passed over without notice, I might be con-

\* St. Bernard, who resided amongst them, praises them for the purity of their religious principles and moral conduct. *Sermo.* 65, vol. i. p. 328. Runerius, first a Member of their Society, and afterwards an Inquisitor, admits that their only fault was their hatred of the Church of Rome. *Test. Verit.* vol. ii. p. 545.

sidered as anxious to sacrifice the cause of truth to that of party, by concealing the crimes of some of those who, as advocates of the Reformation, injured its great cause by acting contrary to those principles of charity and benevolence on which it was truly founded.

But it may still be asked, is it not time to cast a veil over the depravities of a corrupt and wicked nature, and not to revive scenes which neither *justice* nor *Christianity* ought to impute to modern Catholics, who were not parties to the crimes then committed, and therefore exempt from accusation; and who reprobate every species of atrocity (which the abuse of religion too often provokes) with as much indignation as any other description of Christians? Therefore, an unrelenting and persecuting spirit could alone indulge in such afflicting recitals. My reply is this—If the most subtle casuist could impute to any man so base a motive, his heart must be *black* indeed. My opposition is against *that power* which assumes to be infallible, not against its victims, which deserve relief and excite commiseration. Doubtless all objectionable doctrines will now be absolutely disclaimed; and it may therefore be expected, that the *negative* assertions of the Papal power will be received as satisfactory evidence of her *real* doctrines. However, as a criterion will be proposed, by which *alone* such doctrines can be appreciated, I shall



only say, that, though the crimes to which I have referred may now be reprobated, and individual or collective guilt also deprecated and condemned, yet that such guilt never will be *identified* with the *sanctity* and *indelibility* of the office in which it was matured, and from whence it proceeded. I can distinguish between the slaves of an *assumed* authority, and the authority itself. I can freely accept the protest of the former against the perpetration of crime, and am not prepared to question its sincerity. Criminal and presumptuous I might then be truly called, if I should ever attempt to explore the motives of human actions, otherwise than by the direct evidence of incontestable facts. Innocence must ever be presumed, until guilt is clearly established. Let it, however, be recollected, that what, in this *enlightened* age, is denominated *crime*, was, at the periods I have adverted to, entitled *virtue*. The actors in these tragedies were not then criminal, but *meritorious*. Engaged in the service of the *true* church, all minor considerations vanished; and zeal in her service, by the extirpation of *heretical pravity*, was considered as "doing God service." If the infallibility of the Church is to be conceded as unquestionable, it follows *irresistibly*, that such infallibility was as inseparably united with the Pontificate of Innocent III. when the first Crusade was proclaimed against the Albigenses, as when the

Apostle Peter, in the spirit of true Christianity, directed all the pastors of the meek and lowly Jesus "to feed the flock of Christ:" and, if immutability is considered as one of its essential qualities, the doctrines propagated and enforced by the Church of Rome, must exactly agree with the *letter* and the *spirit* of those doctrines which the Apostle Peter taught, practised, and inculcated; otherwise the *rock* on which infallibility has been attempted to be erected, may prove a quicksand, demolishing at once its existence and its name!

Edward VI. after a short but interesting reign, expired at Greenwich, at the early age of sixteen years, yet matured in virtue, and with hopes full of immortality; and was succeeded by his sister Mary, after a short struggle for sovereignty, in which the accomplished Lady Jane Gray became the innocent and lamented victim of another's ambition, a striking example of the instability of all human greatness!

Mary successfully attempted to intimidate the nation, by restoring that Papal authority which, with the hearty concurrence of the nation, had been disclaimed and abolished. And though the principles of the Reformation were as yet only partially received, and the doctrines of the Church of Rome, even in Edward's contracted reign, had many advocates; yet the recollection of the many and various exactions which were

imposed by Papal authority, previous to its abolition in his royal father's reign, was so strong and forcible, that even those who were most attached to the ancient doctrines submitted with impatience and reluctance to the many and various oppressions under which they laboured during her short but sanguinary reign.

At length, the extreme vices and crimes of mankind became the auxiliaries of that truth they were marshalled to destroy. The zeal of infuriated bigots called forth and produced the qualities of those illustrious witnesses to the truth, which years of pampered ease would have in vain effected—*that* courage, which no danger could afright; *that* constancy, which neither artifice could weaken nor interest seduce; *that* contempt of death, *that* hope of glory, which proclaimed the Christian's triumph and the Christian's cause.

Adversity has been justly called the school of virtue. During this awful visitation, the compunctions of alarmed conscience must have penetrated the most hardened breast; and such agitations must have been communicated, as to appal the guilty and deter the daring.

The principle of fear is direct and operative: it promotes reflection, by magnifying danger, and producing such effects as compels a man to take a survey of himself, and to discover where a remedy is to be found, when the seductions of vice or the intrepidity of guilt are in vain applied to

as specifics for the cure of those tortures which a wounded spirit cannot endure.

Many must have retired, at this awful period, from such afflicting scenes, and in secret have confessed their conviction of that truth which others were considered as more worthy to attest by the surrender of their lives to that great Being for whom they lived, and in whose cause they gladly suffered.

Under such circumstances, Elizabeth (the intended victim of her sister's fury) ascended the throne, with the universal consent of the whole nation; and such was the effect which the preceding short but tragic reign produced, such were the reflections which men of all professions drew from a retrospect of the late awful events, that, on a proclamation issued by Elizabeth to the Bishops and Clergy to conform to the Reformed doctrine and discipline of the Church of England, from a body of 9400 Clergy, which England and Wales then contained, not more than about 200 persons were to be found who resigned their respective livings, sooner than comply with such national proclamation \*.

It may still be objected, with some indignation, (notwithstanding what has been already advanced), that Catholics are competent to ascertain the nature and to perform the duties of civil

\* Vide Rapin's History of England. (Elizabeth.)

allegiance, which neither can nor does interfere with that duty of spiritual allegiance which they ought to render to their Bishops and Pastors, as the authorised agents of the Church of Rome, from whose sole authority they receive their respective commissions.

Let the following observations be duly weighed, and then let candour decide whether such objection can be supported.

Anxious, as I truly am, to separate *Catholics*, of every religious persuasion, from the effect of imputations levelled against the principles of the *Anti-catholic system only*, and not against the persons of which it is composed; it will, I apprehend, be admitted, that the term “spiritual” was always of extended and indefinite signification, contracted or enlarged as the Papal power was elevated or depressed,—and, therefore, that the duty of civil allegiance must necessarily be *contingent* and *precarious*, and that since the reign of Charlemagne, when the right of convoking Councils was ceded to the Pope, *which right the Emperors previously possessed and uniformly exercised* \*. The spiritual jurisdiction of the Papal power was then, and for a considerable period afterwards, so extensive as to embrace almost

\* Giannone's History of Naples, lib. i. chap. 2; Code, lib. xxx. de Episcopis et Clericis, 23d Novel of Justinian.

every case which the various relations of society could possibly produce; and that, under colour of a spiritual, a temporal jurisdiction included in it was also exercised, whilst authority was enabled to support pretension.

Since that period, in those countries where the religion of the Church of Rome is not established, but only tolerated, its spiritual claims are so far preserved in the opinion of those who are instructed to believe that the rights of the Church are perpetual and indefeasible, that no precise line or boundary is described so as to enable the party who may have violated its rules to know whether, in fact, such violation has ever happened until he is visited with a punishment which he is not conscious that he has incurred.

But as Papal authority is not questionable, he concludes its spiritual jurisdiction must be as extended as its limits are undiscoverable. He is, therefore, unable to know whether the obedience which, as a subject, he is bound to render to the laws of his country, does or does not militate against the spiritual directions which he is bound to receive and implicitly to follow.

Surely proof of this will not be required. I apprehend not: but it must be conceded, that, if the Catholic believes in the Divinity of the power which is thus assumed, he renders that obedience which such authority would justly claim, and

compared with which no earthly power could hold any competition.

If, then, the Catholic admits the quality and extent of such a power, his homage to it is *paramount*, his obedience *primary* and *indispensable*.

Nothing *can*, nay, nothing *ought*, under such a conviction, to interfere with his spiritual allegiance.

Though ignorant of the duties which he may be required to perform, or of the punishment which awaits delay, he falls prostrate before this divinity of man's device, and becomes the vassal of an undisputed authority.

Either Infallibility must be admitted to this extent, as partaking of a divine nature, or it is capable of limitation and restraint; the mere possibility of which is so contradictory and subversive of Divine authority that, even for a moment entertained, this boasted power would at once dissolve, and, "like the baseless fabrick of a vision, leave not a wreck behind."

The "Infallibility of the Church" must, therefore, be sedulously cultivated, and believed without doubt or examination; and though the admission of such a doctrine, and the consequent exercise of a foreign jurisdiction, at present only disqualifies from the reception and enjoyment of power and privilege, whilst its consequent doctrines, like effects following their immediate

causes, though not openly avowed, are not publicly *renounced*, though, on some occasions perhaps, *privately* disclaimed. Whilst such policy is observed, toleration is liberally extended to the Catholics of Ireland, by a state professing and practising the duties of Christianity (however different the conduct of those in other countries, who exercise all the terrific powers of unhallowed authority, may possibly be); yet if any doctrines should be openly and publicly avowed and professed which would be *directly* subversive of the safety of the state, *previous to the acquisition of political power*, then truly it would be difficult to determine whether the avowal would be more criminal than its *impolicy* would be conspicuous. In such a case we might discover, by comparing the authority of one, whose sentiments on the subject of religious toleration was never disproved, with the policy and conduct of the Government, since the repeal of the Penal Laws, that it would then have far exceeded those limits which, on such a contingency, were marked out and prescribed by his liberal and comprehensive mind\*.

Having attempted negatively to describe the nature and character of loyalty and civil obedience, by detailing the consequences of a nominal but divided allegiance, I come now to consider

\* See Locke on Toleration, 2d edit, Lond. 1690, pp. 64—69.



whether those blessings can be permanently secured by the pastoral labours of the Irish Hierarchy; and, in the prosecution of this inquiry, I must previously enter my solemn protest against even the intention of aspersing or defaming character, under the specious pretence of reforming error or of correcting vice,—as I would justly incur detestation, if for a moment I could devote my humble talents to such an anti-Christian purpose.

By those few pastors with whom I have for many years cultivated an acquaintance, and perhaps acquired their esteem, I cannot anticipate that such unworthy motives would be imputed to me. My sentiments on religious subjects, as connected with the exercise of reason and the knowledge of those duties which men, as members of the social body, ought first to learn that they might afterwards conscientiously practise, are not unknown to them.

My intention was to cultivate and improve the mind to which such sentiments were addressed, not to increase and confirm its prejudices, by inflaming its resentment.

The exchange of mutual kindness did not cease between us.' My reasoning, though admitted to be candid, was neither satisfactory nor conclusive; which, on subsequent reflection, did not surprize me, as the arms which reason supplies were ill

calculated to storm the entrenchments of precedent surrounding the citadel of unquestioned and, of course, infallible authority.

To those with whom I had not the same facilities of social converse, I am also anxious to declare, that if they are resolved to cultivate "the Truth," and thereby to promote inquiry, I will gladly co-operate, cheering and animating "their works and labour of love."

But *if not, then* I will impeach the authority of that spiritual head upon earth which they serve and acknowledge, and endeavour to prevent the future consequences of their *perverted* but incessant toils; yet even then my anxiety shall not abate, but will, I trust, be evinced by the performance of every duty which Christian charity prescribes, as bodily or spiritual wants should thicken and accumulate.

I deprecate the term "Protestantism," when employed by faction to excite division; but I respect the members of every religious profession, who proclaim "peace on earth, good-will towards men."

And really I know of no possible method by which these great objects can be so effectually obtained as by distributing to famished and expiring souls, that "manna which cometh down from heaven," filling their hearts with joy and gladness; thus enabling them to cultivate the

blessings of peace and social order, by the attainment and exercise of that "righteousness which alone exalteth a nation."

I can readily admit, that the situation in which the Catholic Hierarchy is placed is difficult and peculiar. Exercising a species of patriarchal jurisdiction over more than three millions of the Irish population, they must effect, by influence and restraint, what they ought to achieve by pure and unsophisticated instruction.

Punishment must deter where reflection cannot console. Compelled, in the exercise of their pastoral functions, to adhere to the rigid letter of the commission under which they act, they mete out to their flocks the same measure which they had before received, and silence clamour or profane inquiry by this pastoral and instructive answer, "that the Church has so decreed."

Correction without instruction is tyranny.

Discipline must therefore increase where passion reigns, and reason is *first* suspended and *then* perverted.

When a simple but sublime process is not used in order to produce its correspondent effects, but a complicated one is resorted to; when the substance is lost in pursuit of the shadow; the dexterity of the performer must be great and continued, in order to exhibit to the deluded senses some faint resemblance of the original, which can

neither convince the judgment nor animate and console the heart.

The pastoral duty, therefore, amongst such a population must be *labour indeed*. And really when I reflect on the predicament in which both are placed, I know not which most to commiserate; the one who is obliged to sell, or the other who is compelled to purchase.

And here, my Lord, uninfluenced either by prejudice or party, I am anxious to detail facts, and not to disguise them. It may not, therefore, be irrelevant to state also the two modes of instruction, as now practised by the pastors of our Ecclesiastical Establishment, for the political security of the State, and for the moral happiness of the People. The first and best mode consists in the circulation of the Scriptures, pure and without alloy, unaccompanied with either notes or comments, through the medium of Bible Associations among all classes of society not impervious to the truth, in enforcing its motives and sanctions by the means of public preaching and private exhortations.

The latter mode is partly negative: it consists, not so much in actually opposing as in paralyzing and discouraging the noble and Christian efforts of these Associations, from motives inexplicable to me, and perhaps undiscoverable even by those who thus *virtually* oppose them.

It is also partly positive. It is true, it consists in recommending the study of the Scriptures; but it is equally certain that it does not consist in inquiring whether such directions have been followed; or, if so, what have been the *individual* fruits of such pastoral admonitions.

It consists in preaching *coldly* and *periodically* the deductions of human wisdom *from* the “word,” but not the *word itself*.

It consists in enforcing the practice of morality, by pointing out the rewards of virtue and the punishment of vice; but it does *not* consist in prescribing and enforcing the means by which the heart is to be purified, from which alone, as from its genuine source, pure morality can only flow.

It consists in a due performance of what is called “duty,” as prescribed by human authority.

It consists in a solemn exterior and a due decorum; but it does *not* consist in acting up to the spirit of the original commission as given by our great Master; “Go, preach the Gospel to every creature:” “Be instant in season and out of season.” No; far from it: but its advocates, being “wise in their generation,” adopt such means as are most conducive to the ends they respectively propose to attain.

This latter mode is most prevalent, as possessing decided advantages over the former, by affording leisure for indulgence, and more time

for the recreations and amusements of polished society; but *above all*, it is strictly *canonical*, as it does not violate but is completely *within* the *letter* of human authority.

And though those pastors who adopt the latter mode of instruction are not zealous in the propagation of the truth, yet, what is truly essential, they neither impeach nor *wilfully* pervert it; but, leaving it to the efforts of its own unaided but *impressive* force, they thus *unconsciously* produce still more *decisive internal* evidence of its unquestionable divinity.

I am aware it may be objected (and plausibly too), that the same evils which are supposed to issue from the doctrine and discipline of the "Catholic Church" may be equally apprehended from the doctrine and discipline of every other religious association, and, if Catholics would become dangerous to the State by the acquisition of power and privilege, the same danger might be expected to ensue from such acquisition by other subjects, as Catholics acknowledge the authority of the Scriptures, and profess all the fundamental truths therein contained.

This objection may be best answered by considering the variance between the Protestant and Catholic doctrine, as far as each is connected with public security, (farther, I freely admit, it would be inquisitorial to extend it); and whether such

general principles as, applicable to each profession, are discoverable in the unity of their doctrines, as derived from the same source, and acknowledging the same authority.

Identity of opinion upon any subject cannot always be reasonably expected; and if we reflect on the powers and faculties of man, as contrasted with his natural corruption and consequent depravity, much less can identity of opinion be expected on a subject having for its object and its end the contemplation of that Great Being which the heaven of heavens cannot contain!

Man, endowed with reason, and enabled (unlike other animals) to raise his eyes, in adoration, to his Creator, may indulge in and profitably enjoy the privilege of abstract speculation on the essence of the Divine Nature, if such speculations should assist in raising and elevating his grovelling mind to that great Cause, and not in impiously attempting to restrain *Immensity* within the periphery of his *puny* demonstrations.

But there are fixed and cardinal principles which the Record contains, that cannot be justly called the legitimate property of any religious profession, *from the mere repetition of acknowledged terms.*

They can be justly claimed by those who acknowledge the Divine authority *alone* from which such Scriptures proceed, to the utter exclusion of any vicarious or divinely delegated authority

to any created being whatsoever; as a contrary belief invalidates the operation of that Record which they admit to be Divine.

The Bishops and Clergy of Ireland, with those of every country the tributaries of Papal power, appeal, then, to the Record of Truth in proof of their assertion, that they hold and profess all the fundamental doctrines it contains. If so, by that Record *alone*, must such an assertion be supported.

If they appeal to the Record in order to prove that they hold all the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel in common with the members of every other religious profession, they indirectly proclaim that they hold *no* doctrines *inconsistent* with or in *opposition* to it; for as such Record contains the whole and perfect will of God, to such a degree as that it is "sufficient to make men wise unto salvation," it follows, that nothing can, with *impunity*, be *added* to it, or *subtracted* from it.

But the doctrines which they profess and inculcate, *in addition* to what such Record contains, are not only *not* discoverable *by* it but contrary *to* it; and as the truths which it declares cannot be obeyed, whilst other extrinsic and contrary doctrines are enjoined and inculcated, it follows, that though such fundamental doctrines are *nominally* professed, yet that they are, in fact, *virtually* disclaimed. However, I appeal to the Record as the best refutation of such anticipated objection.



Are the Bishops and Clergy of Ireland satisfied to submit their *additional* doctrines to this criterion, the authority of which they, in *words*, acknowledge? Or must these Scriptures of truth, (which their merciful Author directed all, without distinction, to search and to examine,) be first explained and interpreted by the "Church," in order to correct the errors of the former, by the infallibility of the latter? Is the creature to be wiser than the Creator? We are clearly told, that we cannot serve two masters. Here, then, is a two-fold obedience promised by the Catholics of Ireland: 1st, To the Scriptures, as such are admitted by their Clergy to be Divine, and consequently to the authority from whence they originate; 2dly, To the Church.

If the due order is to be inverted; if obedience is to be rendered *primarily* to the "Church," and its decisions to be considered as infallible, and therefore divine;—if the Scriptures are to be suppressed and prohibited, or if, partially dealt out and rendered to an insulted people, they must first be interpreted by the Church, and then even promulgated partially, not as a *right*, but as a *favour*;—before the Scriptures, thus "sensed and characterized," can be considered as instructive and mandatory;—if such tyrannical authority can, with impunity, and without remonstrance, be exercised over the conscience and reason of mankind, unsanctioned by any *express* revelation or *special* grant

of such power to the Church of Rome, by the production of which alone could its exercise be possibly justified ;—*then*, indeed, the semblance of Christianity (more formidable than its total rejection) becomes an insidious engine, by which the foundations of real Christianity are *vainly* sought to be undermined and destroyed.

If such are facts, as here stated, and not the wanderings of a distempered fancy, where is public security to be found? If opinion regulates, to a considerable extent, the security of every state, must not the source from whence it proceeds be explored, in order to discover its nature and qualities? Whether the authority on which such opinions are founded be Divine or human; and if the latter (under semblance of the former), whether its requisitions are injurious to the safety of the State, by enjoining, on its vassals, more than what may be justly called a “reasonable service,” by acknowledging an authority paramount to that under which *alone* political power (in these realms, to the exclusion of any foreign jurisdiction,) can possibly be conferred. If it is asserted, that canonical obedience to the Pope is perfectly consistent with the duties of civil allegiance; such a proposition must be proved, not by the declarations of modern churchmen, nor by conclusions of an accommodating casuistry, but by the inspection of those original records which history has disclosed and detected, and on

which a dispassionate tribunal will *alone* be competent to pronounce a decision. A passive endurance may exhibit a deceitful calm: but where is the reflecting choice, displaying actions as descriptive of their genuine source, and pointing to their destination as their effects and consequences?

If what I before stated is true; viz. that the *holy Roman Catholic Church is the only* society denominated "Christian," which believes and professes that a *vicarious* authority is now *duly and legitimately* exercised by the Pope, as the representative on earth of the living and eternal God, whose decrees, united with a council over which he presides, are infallible and irreversible; and, if such a bold and daring assumption is to be swallowed without proof, and digested without reflection;—then a more extended detail of those effects and consequences which experience proves might justly be apprehended, if political power, under such circumstances, was entrusted to them, is not only excusable, but also indispensable.

That the profession of religion is essentially requisite to the security of every State, as well as to the happiness of every individual contained in it, is a truth which will be universally conceded; and also, that such security will be in the ratio of the doctrine taught, and the morality enjoined.

If the doctrines professed and inculcated are those *only* which the word of life contains, *then*

morality, as its effect and consequence, will proclaim its origin by actions productive of glory to God and of happiness to man;—*then*, infallibility will be attached only to the “written word,” and not to human authority, which too successfully enforces its own interpretation as Divine and irreversible; — *then*, Christians of every religious denomination, however variant their opinions (merely speculative) may possibly be, will acknowledge their great Master as the exclusive Head of *the true Catholic Church* militant here upon earth;—*then*, *spiritual allegiance* (on the authority of the Record of Truth) will be paid directly to Him alone, as the only and best security which the state can obtain, either for its subjects acquiring a knowledge of, or performing the subordinate duties of, civil allegiance.

And truly, my Lord, had my faculties (however limited) never been permitted to mount above the standard of “the infallibility of the church;” and if this doctrine was administered in the place of spiritual food, as *essentially necessary to salvation*; I doubt not that I would, not only implicitly believe it, but (not possessing much constitutional apathy) I would vigorously enforce its doctrines, and thus imagine I should “render God service.”

Man, truly speaking, is a *superstitious*, and to superficial observation might appear to be a *re-*

*ligious*, animal ; but as religion is a “reasonable service,” the distinction is too wide to admit of any comparison.

The sentiments of one who first essayed (after many dark and gloomy centuries) to rescue man from trammels, and to raise him to the level which he ought to assume, deserves our deep attention.

“It were better,” says this great Philosopher, “to have no opinion of God at all, than such an opinion as is unworthy of him ; for the one is unbelief, the other is contumely ; and certainly superstition is the reproach of the Deity\*.” These sentiments are applicable to the Anti-catholic system, and can *only* become offensive if they are *true* ;—if *they are not*, though the calumniator might justly merit reprehension, yet his brittle and adventurous lance must at once be shivered on striking that impenetrable shield of faith, which the true Church could then be enabled to present against them.

It has, with much exultation, been asserted, that the present is “an enlightened age.” I rejoice at the *philosophic* discovery—of course the peculiar season for separating truth from falsehood, error from *ignorance*, and *assumed* from *genuine* patriotism.

To attain happiness is man’s great and ultimate object ; as peculiar to his nature as (in the mate-

\* Bacon’s Essays, No. 17.

rial world) it is the property of cold to contract, and of heat to rarify and expand: but the means used to obtain it, in the moral world, are not governed by the same unerring laws.

Man, actuated and impelled by strong and impetuous passions, but also endowed with reason to direct, regulate, and restrain them, and partaking equally of such propensities as are inherent in animals of an inferior nature, and in them wisely implanted, enabling them to obtain their *definite* and *prescribed* ends by *direct* and *unerring* means—man, endowed with natural powers and faculties, amongst which reason ought to hold its high and appropriate station—hath yet fallen below this common, this gregarious level. His reason (Heaven's peculiar gift) has been either wilfully perverted or passively surrendered: thus giving to the inferior animals, originally intended for his use and enjoyment, (by the exercise of an unerring instinct), an inverted eminence, to which, by the immutable law of their nature, they could never aspire.

However, the surrender of reason (far more degrading than its abuse) is the sure seal and certain confirmation of an abject and hopeless condition, from which *good* cannot arise; on which no human hope, at least, can cast one transient ray to cheer or to enliven.

Man, not *simply ignorant*—(abusing his reason, and employing it as an auxiliary to promote and

stimulate his passions, and not as a monitor to direct and restrain them)—but *systematically erroneous* (though under the guidance of infallible authority), comes forward in the glare of open day, and, unconscious of the value of *that emancipation* to which, by Heaven's high decree, he is so fully entitled, and equally unconscious of that *mental bondage* under which he ought to groan, alternately claims or petitions (as passion dictates) for political power and privileges, and, with an infatuation as *consistent* as it is incomprehensible, *proclaims the existence of an irresistible body of "Catholics," who are determined to be free!* Is it necessary for me again to repeat this question, Under such circumstances, where is public security to be found? Is it in the concession of political power? Is this the appropriate means to dispel error and to enforce conviction? Will success ensure security, when experience has ever proved that prosperity is not the season for reflection?—That policy which is anxious to elevate, and not to depress, by making "the patient minister unto himself," can never, if truth is unchangeable, be justly vilified with the name of persecution.

If Catholics are determined to be free, let them recover the possession of that Charter of "Truth," *which alone can make them free.*" If civil liberty and political power are blessings of such extreme value, by what known cri-

terion are we to estimate the value of religious liberty—a blessing contained in Heaven's Charter, but withheld from man, to prostrate and degrade him to a state of servitude, at the very moment he is impelled to claim and to solicit privileges which (during such bondage) he must abuse, but could never enjoy?

It may, however, be inquired, how Sectarists (or those out of the pale of the Catholic church) are to be distinguished by the spiritual allegiance which they render, agreeably to the respective opinions which each entertain of that primary and essential duty.

Has not the Catholic church published versions of the Old and New Testament, accompanied with notes and comments; and are not Catholics permitted to read the Scriptures, *as the "Church" may deem them competent to do so*; and are any restrained but those who might be injured by such perusal? If Sectarists claim and enjoy this boasted privilege of possessing and reading the Scriptures according to their own discretion and caprice, where are its fruits? If crimes are committed, are such exclusively Catholic? Were Catholics the promoters and perpetrators of those crimes which the Riots of London in 1780 produced?

It will, I trust, be conceded that this objection has been fully and fairly urged: I will therefore endeavour to answer its respective parts. Though I may offend the prejudiced and disgust those



who assume to be philosophical, yet, regardless of such praise and undeterred by such censure, I will derive consolation and refreshment from that Fountain of living waters, which is imperious to the one and disregarded by the other.

And, first, as to the nature of that spiritual allegiance which Protestants and other Sectarists conceive it is their bounden duty to perform.—Such persons are early taught one great and comprehensive precept, as *elementary* and *imperative*; “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with *all* thy heart, and with *all* thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.” This precept they consider as the very key-stone or foundation of spiritual allegiance to be rendered *directly* and *exclusively* to the great Jehovah? And they are further instructed how to appreciate this gracious invitation of mercy to ungrateful rebels: “Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” And though they too often abuse the mercy thus so bountifully promised, by neglecting to lay hold on the hope that is set before them, yet they do not disparage or insult the authority from whence such invitation issues, by recurring to the intercession or mediation of any created being whatsoever, in opposition to the plain and obvious direction which this truly benevolent invitation so clearly enjoins.

Convinced as they are (whenever conscience awakens or appals them) of this memorable and

impressive declaration; "I am the Lord; that is my name: and my glory I will not give to another, neither my praise to graven images\*," they are ignorant of any honour (however subordinate) due to a creature, and conceive the crime in no way palliated by referring the supreme honour and worship to God alone.

They are satisfied that the first and great Commandment ought to engage and arrest the *whole* mind, and that the least tribute of religious honour or respect to a creature (however *plausibly* and *indirectly* supreme honour and adoration may be referred to God alone) constitutes a species of spiritual treason, which, though not professed by *words*, is yet discoverable by *actions*; *negativizing* the sincerity, and neutralizing the effects, of those professions, by which it is declared by the Church of Rome that supreme worship is due to God alone: for on what other principle, than on that of the *entire* devotion of the creature to God, can this impressive passage be felt and understood, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and him *only* shalt thou serve?" Hence Sectarists, however clogged and impeded with the alloy of a corrupt nature, never divide, and consequently never *virtually* disavow, that spiritual allegiance which is due to God *alone*.

Hence human laws may restrain or punish man's natural infirmities and consequent crimes,

\* Isaiah xlii. 6.

until mercy arrests him in his mad career, saves him from himself, and at length converts him (by the use of appointed means) into "a chosen vessel fit for its Master's use."

Thus man contributes to the security of the social state by submitting to "be taught of God," through the instrumentality of "the word" coming with power into his heart, and thereby communicating to him, through the dispensations of His grace, "that peace which the world cannot give."

What human teaching could achieve so great a work as this? What human authority could afford such unmixed consolation? How vain and hopeless must be the effort! how presumptuous and profane even the supposition! How incalculable the advantages of such instruction! How admirably adapted to promote happiness, by increasing security, the past contrasted with the present state of Scotland irresistibly proclaims.

But Catholics, it is urged (such, however, as "the Church" licenses and approves), may read the Scriptures in their appointed versions, with such notes and comments as are calculated to prevent its votaries from receiving any taint or injury by the perusal of that Record which its bountiful Author not only considered them qualified to peruse, but, as a proof thereof, directed them (all without distinction) to "search" and to examine, as their right and privilege, but which *human*,

under the semblance of *Divine*, authority confers only on a few, and under many restrictions, as a *favour*—not as a *right unimpeached and unimpeachable*;—thus measuring the wisdom of Heaven by the low and degraded standard of imperfect and sinful man; restricting the *general* distribution of those very Scriptures which contain the words of eternal life, in direct opposition to that *unerring* authority which enjoined, as a duty, what “the Church,” in the exercise of its unhallowed power, denominates a crime!

If, however, the “Catholic” version, with notes and comments, may, under such restrictions, be partially circulated among a few chosen members of a large and famished population, are such notes and comments annexed to the text for any and what purpose?

Is it to prevent the injury which might attend the perusal of the simple truth; or is it that the texts, as used and admitted by Sectarists, have been perverted, and that such guards and precautions are necessary to protect their flock from the consequences of a spurious doctrine?

If the publication of the simple truth produces alarm and consternation, will not such notes and comments thus accompanying it preserve that unity of sentiment which “the Church” so justly appreciates? And if such appendages are the productions of an unerring authority, what danger could arise from their general distribution?

Will not these *infallible specifics* convey to their readers such a portion of infallibility as to supersede the necessity of oral interpretation? Or if they are not such accredited productions; that is, if “the Church” does not consider such notes and comments as *infallible*; for what purpose are they added to the “Catholic” version? If, however, the purity of that version which Sectarists now use is impeached as erroneous, it would peculiarly belong to “infallibility,” not only to point out to a benighted world the errors which such version contains, but also to publish such an “*infallible*” edition as must carry with it clearer and more internal evidence of the Truth, than the version with which all Sectarists are now fully satisfied; and though they cannot boast of that unity of *sentiment*, or unity of *practice*, which is harmoniously responsive to the uncontrouled orders of “the Church;” yet they can produce direct and undivided allegiance to the exclusive Head of the Catholic Church—the Beginning and End—the Author and Finisher of their faith.

I am truly anxious that the nature and intention of this address should not be misconceived or perverted. So far from being a supporter of a faction or the creature of a party, if my feeble efforts could effectuate my intentions, I would gladly suppress the one and paralyze the other, and thus receive, either from their mutual silence or reprobation, my best and highest consolation.

To circulate Truth, and thereby promote security, is the object of my undisguised ambition, the aim and end of my fond, but, I trust, not deceptive, hopes—objects not to be obtained either by individual comparisons or by personal aspersions; for in sincerity I declare, that I can bewail the condition of the patient at the very moment of my exertions to eradicate his inveterate and protracted disease.

To repeat, that man by nature is corrupt and wicked, is an offensive but undoubted truth, whether applied to individuals or communities: if to the latter, perhaps more peculiarly so; as hereditary prejudices, being systematically and progressively accumulated, are proportionably roused and alarmed, and passions, uniting with prejudices, not enabling them to distinguish between *natural* and *artificial* corruptions, are excited *nominally* against the person who proclaims the Truth, but *really against the Truth itself*: for as the latter cannot be disproved, it may, however, be *indirectly* discredited, by attempting to divert the public mind from the investigation of the “Truth,” by fixing its attention on the *motives* of such a character as is adventurous enough to proclaim it; and thus “the Truth,” the true cause of alarm and dismay, that “stone of stumbling and rock of offence\*,” will, if possible, be removed from profane observation.

\* 1 Peter ii. 8.

*I can excuse, nay, on defensive principles, I can justify, the man ; though I can condemn the Anti-catholic system to which he blindly clings.*

*Catholic support of catholic doctrines, as connected with the security of every state, and the happiness of man, is only expected after free inquiry and dispassionate investigation.*

What are the *moral* and imprescriptible rights of man, as an accountable and intelligent being ? I answer, the uncontrouled exercise of his reason and its consequent sublimation, by a free and direct communion with his God, *from whom* such a distinguished privilege could proceed, and *to whom* alone, for its surrender, he must be accountable.

When I proclaimed the awful fact of man's corruption, I necessarily admitted its operation to be co-extensive with the whole human race ; and when I endeavoured to prove, that the Constitution of the Church in Ireland, over which an Hierarchy presides, holding spiritual commissions from the See of Rome, was *anti-catholic* ; and that its votaries rendered such an unqualified submission to its orders and decrees as was inconsistent with that security which an increase of political power ought *demonstrably* to produce ;—it never was or could be my intention to exempt from the consequences of such corruption, those Protes-

tants or Sectarists who may and too often have *abused* their reason, though they have not surrendered it. Yet of these, there are many who have too often, in common with Catholics, disturbed the harmony of social life, by enrolling themselves as the devoted instruments of patrons who are anxious either to retain power by influence, or to acquire it by popularity; and thus the constitutional influence of property has been perverted, habits of industry diminished, fallacious hopes indulged, dependence its consequence, and crime too often its consummation. Justice compels me to declare, that some characters are to be found who, as the trustees of public confidence, are slaves to *no* sect or party, but consult only the true interests of their country; and, like faithful centinels, give the alarm when danger is near and imminent, but, contrary to the physical nature of sound, their voices make no impression on the surrounding atmosphere.

But to reply more directly to the latter part of the objection already stated, I will freely and at once admit, that the Riots of London, in 1780, were not produced by those who are falsely denominated “Catholics;” such, generally speaking, were not concerned; and that the distinguished leader of that day obtained such a situation as his services eminently deserved,—though it might be questioned, whether his *unenvied* reward was equal



to the extent of his deserts. Perhaps, his subsequent conversion to the Jewish faith ought to have made him consider it necessary, on the contemplation of a second crusade, to collect his new allies, and to array them against his former associates; thus engaging in two opposite services, and enabling his apologists (if any could be found) to support the consistency of his conduct, in either case, with arguments equally satisfactory.

But will it be gravely contended, that such rioters, or the maniac who excited them, then conceived that they were "thus doing God service?"

Alas! human depravity, unrestrained by reason or by conscience, is amply sufficient to account for crimes which cease with their causes; leaving, however, after them, such proofs of guilt and deformity as require punishment to deter, not sufferings or privations to atone for them; which require instruction to produce reform, not error to palliate or confirm them.

On those who have only perverted their reason, human laws often act with salutary effect, in converting our inherent and acquired enormities, into the means by which vice may be restrained and passion subjugated; as the mind, searching in vain for aid from human consolation, may, at length, by the influence of a controuling power, discover in what the use of reason consists, and perceive, on reflection, the merciful sanctions of

those laws which before were *exultingly* violated.

The importance of the subject must plead my excuse for repetition.

Let me then ask the Irish Hierarchy, (however impressive their lectures on loyalty and morality may possibly be), Is not the "Infallibility of the Church" taught and inculcated as *essential, unquestionable, and indispensable*\*? Does not the belief of this doctrine contain *within itself*, that spiritual allegiance which is due to God alone? If it should be replied, that the belief of this doctrine does not exact such supreme homage and allegiance, in what does such infallibility consist?

If error is inseparable from our frail and corrupt nature, its opposite quality, "infallibility," can *alone* be applicable to that which is *divine*. Must not, therefore, the authority which possesses it, be *alone* intitled to such supreme and devoted allegiance? If "infallibility" is a divine emanation, it belongs to a Supreme Being, who claims the whole devotion of the heart, and the *entire* obedience of the life, and who can neither admit

\* "The Church" is infallible in her doctrinal decisions and canons, in points of faith and morals; and, therefore, *the Catholics are obliged to adhere implicitly to such decrees and canons of the Church assembled in General Council, and confirmed by the Pope, as articles of faith*. Vide Dr. Troy's Pastoral Letter, 1793; who also says, that the decrees and decisions of the Pope, delivered "*ex cathedra*," are of the same character.

of honour to the *creature* nor receive from his votaries less than supreme adoration.

Does not such concession, therefore, expressly disprove the vain prétensions of that church which has set up an idol that millions have fallen down to worship? Or, if such concession is not made, and the doctrine of Infallibility will yet be persisted in, either error is imputed to the Divine nature, or an authority independent of it is impiously raised up and established!

What renders the conduct and character of the real, so mysterious and offensive to the nominal, Christian? Is it not, that supreme love to God is his peculiar and distinguished feature? In Him he lives, moves, and has his being; and in dependence upon *Him*, the humble Christian “goes on his way rejoicing,” fearless of all his spiritual adversaries, being “more than conqueror through Him that loved him.” He discovers the *spirituality* of the Moral Law, and therefore, renders obedience from choice, and not from compulsion.

His actions are the comments of his sincerity, and the evidences of his benevolence.

Hence he becomes offensive to the nominal Christian of every profession, who, substituting ceremonial for real obedience, caters to his own propensities, by deceiving his heart, and, judging by a comparison which self-love naturally suggests, derives a spurious consolation from the vices of those around him, without any sacrifice

of indulgences which he holds most dear, and which, by a perverted scale of arithmetic, he calculates may be retained with impunity.

The nominal Christian *cannot* offend the world, which gives him the sanction of extended example, and, therefore, receives from it praise, but *never* censure; but *he can* be offended by the *real* Christian, who, living *in* the world, but not *for it*, displays, by the profession and practice of the truth, that superiority which, though it may sometimes appal his conscience, can never stimulate or excite his imitation.

I deprecate even the idea (as I before stated) that the influence of "the truth" could be restrained or confined within the limits of any religious sect or profession. Could my heart be so depraved, or my mind so much obscured, as to entertain so unworthy and uncharitable an opinion, I would merit peculiar reprobation; as I would then support a doctrine which I have hitherto condemned, and thus offer violence to "the Truth," which it is my duty and my privilege to advocate and defend.—Human systems, whether temporal or ecclesiastical, become fair objects of animadversion. I may, therefore, justly continue to observe, that nominal Christians are divisible into two classes: 1st, Those who assent to the truths of the Gospel, merely as historic facts, without experiencing their influence on the heart or conduct, though disclaiming the authority of

any human tribunal to which spiritual homage and obedience should be paid and rendered; and, 2dly, Those who admit the Divine authority of such a tribunal, to which *implicit* obedience becomes a necessary and a bounden duty. In the enumeration of those laws which influence human conduct; viz. the laws of God—of man—and those of opinion and reputation; the latter were, and are, always considered as peculiarly operative and efficacious as their sanctions become immediate, if compliance with, and obedience to, them is not promptly rendered. The service of Mammon, therefore, must be ardent and sincere where fear degrades the *creature*, and where principle cannot animate and exalt the *man*. Thus, even the low level of moral attainments is reluctantly aimed at; and to supply the want of a due elevation, hypocrisy becomes a debt which vice is compelled to pay to virtue.

As to human laws, such is the composition of our corrupt nature, that Hope, so justly called the anchor of the soul, is abused and converted into a motive to violate and oppose them, either by exciting ingenuity to neutralize their force or to escape their terrors; or, if capitally convicted of crime and consigned to suffer that punishment which he is unable to avert, *even then*, the delinquent (from a fear of death) clings to hope, which does not forsake him whilst reprieve or pardon are to be found within the limits of that preroga-

tive of mercy which has been vested in the chief magistrate of the state, as the guardian of those laws which he has violated and abused.

And, as to the Divine laws, whose sanctions delusive hope denominates "remote," because the period of retribution (though ultimately certain) is not precise or definite; and "doubtful," perhaps because they are "reversionary." *These*, "at a more convenient season," are to be satisfied by contrition and repentance. Thus, obedience is rendered to this triple code inversely, as the punishment is considered to be remote or proximate.

But, in referring to the latter class of nominal Christians, the order of obedience is completely inverted. *There*, the sanctions of what is considered as a Divine (though usurped) authority are *immediate* and *direct*; and, that obedience which is uniformly rendered by those of the first class to the laws of opinion and reputation is, in an indefinite degree, rendered by the latter class to such usurped authority, with all that implicit confidence which a conviction of its divinity must irresistibly produce.

The question of moral character, as applicable to the spiritual agents or pastors of an infallible church is not fairly examinable. Far be it from me to impeach or to asperse them; but, unless by the law of their nature they are *exclusively* "*impeccable*," the security of the state must, on an

acquisition of power by the *Laity*, though not by the *Clergy*, remain precarious and discretionary.

If then obedience to the decrees of such an authority would be merely duty, and remonstrance apostacy and rebellion; what collision might not be expected if such decrees should be inimical to the State against which they were proclaimed, and to which they would be unknown until rendered intelligible by their consequences!—an authority still exhibiting, for the instruction of this “enlightened age,” an anomalous jurisdiction, partaking of a divine and human nature; and having found, what Archimedes wanted, another world to rest on, they moved this world as they pleased—thus subjugating the one by the terrors of the other.

I am free to admit, that in the present state of Ireland, its security principally depends upon the well-directed influence of its priesthood, in producing, by discipline, that precarious order which the *use* of reason, exercised in the momentous inquiry of “What is Truth?” could so *permanently* effectuate.

But cannot the *real* security and liberty of a state be otherwise achieved? Is ignorance, polluted by error, to be punished for the violation of laws, whose moral and social obligations are *generally* unknown and unintelligible? If so, though the legislative authority of the State may be free from censure, yet it must be imputable to

that Anti-catholic system from whence such error proceeds.

Dissimulation is the refuge of a degraded and imbecile mind. More anxious to serve than fearful to displease, I am convinced that neither power nor privilege should, or with safety could, be conceded to the "Catholics" of Ireland until the Papal authority is not only *disclaimed* but *actually renounced*; a measure offering no violence to the rights of conscience, but perfectly analogous to the conduct of the Catholics of England, as before stated, who retained the profession of the same faith for a period of more than forty years, from the abjuration of Papal supremacy to the establishment of the Reformation, in the reign of Elizabeth.

This precedent condition is indispensable, that the wretched farce of liberality may no longer become the sport either of the prejudiced or designing; but that when claims, under the colour of petitions, assail the Senate of the land, the only terms upon which power and privilege can or will be conceded, may be prescribed as those upon which this abused question of "Emancipation" must be ultimately decided.

It is more impolitic to excite expectations than to raise objections: the latter may be obviated; the former, if disappointed, may produce effects which, if gratified, they were at least intended to prevent or to defeat. If the performance of this



precedent condition should be resisted on this principle, that such an abjuration of Papal supremacy would be a surrender of the "true and only religion," as in the profession of it is salvation (according to the established doctrine of the Church of Rome) alone to be obtained. This, indeed, if true, would not only amply justify such resistance, but ought to effect more; viz. a conversion of those who are aliens from this "true Church" to a communion with it, in order to obtain what is above calculation—reversionary happiness.

And really, my Lord, if the Hierarchy of Ireland can establish, on true catholic and therefore scriptural principles, this *exclusive* position; or demonstrate how or in what manner the doctrines of the Church of Rome can, on similar principles, render me a more enlightened Christian or a more loyal subject, by substituting their doctrines in the place of those I at present entertain; I am not sufficiently attached to the religious profession of which I am a member, as to resist the force of reason or the warnings of an agitated conscience. But if this invitation should be neglected by this "venerable Hierarchy," and I am permitted to remain in ignorance, such conduct must not be considered to arise from an inability to afford the instruction required; but to a compassionate regard for my humble faculties, which were incapable of comprehending those

sublime mysteries which ought never to be submitted to profane investigation.

I must, however, endeavour to disclose facts which cannot be disproved.

Supremacy, as applied to the Church of Rome, must denote an anterior existence to any other Christian church; and therefore the Church of Rome must necessarily possess such a precedence, as facts can demonstrably establish. Were not the first promises made to the Jews? Was not Jerusalem the first Christian Church? And was not Rome at that period heathen? And if proof of such a notorious fact would be requisite, did not the Apostle Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, declare, “that through their” (the Jews’) “fall, salvation was come unto the Geniles?” And was it not because this precedence could not be substantiated by the clear and decided evidence of history, after human perversion had commenced its ravages among the flock of Christ, that this lucrative fabrication was imposed upon a torpid world, that the Bishop of Rome has received his power from St. Peter, whom Christ had invested with authority *equal to his own*; and that the same remains in the Bishop of Rome to this day as successor of St. Peter, vicar of Christ, and God on earth! The frantic extravagance of these titles must, to any human being who *is not* incapable of reflection, appear to contain an antidote against the poison and delusion they were intended to

convey, if sad experience did not exhibit an awful reverse. If faith is also necessary to political salvation, what incalculable aid must not legislation receive from an accession of such infallible auxiliaries! What were the sentiments of a Roman Bishop (in the latter end of the sixth century), Gregory the First, Bishop of Rome, in his celebrated letter to the Emperor Maurice, with respect to John, Bishop of Constantinople, assuming the title of Universal Bishop\*? “Who is he that presumeth to usurp this new name, against both the law of the Gospel and the Canons?” And in the conclusion of this epistle he says, that, “in obedience to my *sovereign*, I have written to my *brother priest*, that he would desist from the pursuit of this vain glory.” If he give ear unto me, he hath a brother devoted unto him; but if he continue in his pride, I see already what will betide him: he will make *Him* his enemy of whom it is written, God resisteth the proud and giveth

\* Greg. Epist. lib. iv. p. 127.

Vide passages contained in Hist. of Francis Guicciardine, which were subsequently omitted by the Papalins, in all the late editions of Concil. Trent.

Vide Brent's Translation, Fra. Paoli Concil. Trent. pp. 773—782. Lond. 1686.

A Popish writer says: “In pontificibus nemo hodie sanctitatem requirit; optimi putantur si vel leviter mali sint, vel minus boni quam cæteri mortales esse solent.” Papirius Massonius in Vitæ Pauli Tertii, mentioned in the preface to the above passages.

grace to the humble\*. Where was then the successor of St. Peter, as head of the Universal Church? At this period, where was the Catholic Church, if the term "Catholic" is to be received in its restricted, contradictory, and anti-catholic sense, as the communion of those who acknowledged the supremacy of the Pope of Rome? What reply can be made to facts too stubborn to be beaten down by ingenious quibbles, or perverted quotations? How beautiful is truth, standing on its own imperishable basis! It will survive and flourish when "time shall be no longer." The rash and desperate efforts of its enemies will, if possible, invigorate and promote it; and, unlike the miserable inventions of perverted man, the more it is examined, the more evidently will it discover the marks and characters of that Great Master by whom it was designed, and from whence it originated! If Papal Supremacy has not a twig to rest on, where is Infallibility to make a stand? Surely "this liberal and enlightened age" is the appropriate period when this gigantic spectre should be for ever laid; increasing inversely as its distance from those who acknowledge it, and realizing the justice of Swift's observation, "that religion has become an infant with age, and requires miracles to nurse it, as it did in its infancy." Let us take a review of the nature and character of Councils, *previous to and after the*

\* James iv. 6.

assumption of spiritual and temporal jurisdiction by the See of Rome; and discover, *if we can*, any connection between their decisions and that Divine source from whence infallibility is *profanely* suggested to proceed. Are the decrees of Councils to be appealed to, as the peculiar evidences of her Divine pretensions? What are we to denominate the assembly which the Prophet Isaiah thus describes? “Woe to the rebellious children, saith the Lord, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my Spirit, that they may add sin to sin: that walk to go down into Egypt, and have not asked of my mouth; to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt\*!” Was not this a council, and a memorable one, in which human wisdom was blindness and delusion, and human strength weakness and presumption? What are we to denominate that association of which the Royal Psalmist thus speaks; “The kings of the earth stand up, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against his Anointed?” A council.—What was it that condemned the Lord of life and glory to an ignominious death? A council.—And we may also appreciate the estimation in which Paul, the great Apostle of the Gentiles, held such an assembly, when—accused before a Roman governor, (after his providential escape from assassination at Je-

\* Isai. xxx. 1, 2.

rusalem, meditated by his persecutors,) declaring his innocence of the charges which were brought against him, and demanding the proofs of his guilt, which they were not able to adduce, said, "But this I confess, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers\*;" and conscious of his own rectitude, and determined to publish the truth, and resolutely to maintain it—he refused to submit his cause to its inveterate enemies, the Members of the Jewish Sanhedrim, or Council; and claiming the privileges of a Roman citizen, he appealed unto Cæsar†, expecting *that* justice from a Pagan nation which would be withheld by those who had been God's chosen and peculiar people. After that period, nearly three centuries of successive persecutions had elapsed, in which the superiority of the truth was manifested, even by the concessions of its unrelenting adversaries, in the triumphant sufferings of those martyrs whose blood was truly called "the seed of the church."

In the commencement of the fourth century, protection was afforded to the professors of the "Truth," by making Christianity the religion of the State, over which Constantine, entitled "the Great," then presided. Security established and fear dispelled, prosperity commenced her golden reign by the invention of distinctive titles, and by annexing thereto correspondent emoluments.

\* Acts xxiv. 14.

† Acts xxv. 11.

The Christian pastors then made a discovery, of which their predecessors were ignorant and unconscious, "that they were to be ministered unto, and not to minister." The indwelling corruptions of a sinful nature, of course, began to shoot forth with renovated vigour, and too fatally proved that temporal prosperity was not that congenial soil in which the unsophisticated word of life can thrive and flourish. Under such general circumstances, but for a particular purpose, was the first general council, denominated "the Council of Nice," summoned and convened by the Emperor Constantine, at whose deliberations he sat, and over which he presided\*. As the three other Councils—viz. of Ephesus, Chalcedon, and Constantinople—were afterwards similarly summoned and convened by Theodosius the elder, Theodocius the younger, and Martian, and not by the Bishops of Rome †,—and as the authority of these four General Councils was admitted by the Roman and all other Christian churches, — it will not be necessary to detail the nature of their deliberations: but it will be essential to inquire, if infallibility is vested

\* Eusebius's Life of Constantine.

† Socrates's Ecclesiastical History.—And as to the power of the State over ecclesiastical affairs, the 5th Council of Orleans, A. D. 549, declares, "Episcopus elegatur cum voluntate regis juxta electionem Cleri et Plebis sicut in antiquis Canonibus Scriptum."—Natalis Alexander, Ecclesiastical History, vol. v. p. 434.

in no other authority than a Pope and Council, where was infallibility to be found, or by whom was it possessed and exercised, at the respective periods of the first four General Councils, whose authority now stands confessed and unimpeached by the Church of Rome, and has, since the Reformation, been recognized by the Articles of the Church of England, *because their* decrees are not repugnant to the written Word of God, the Scriptures of Truth? If infallibility can only belong to a Pope and Council, then these first four General Councils were devoid of it, as Emperors (not Popes, the term even being then unknown,) summoned, convened, and presided over them. Subtily may attempt to evade what sophistry can never disprove; yet the evidence of facts must silence clamour, and truth irresistibly produce conviction. Such are the numerous shapes and forms this *mysterious falsehood* assumes, that I am forced to repetition when I am most anxious to avoid it. If infallibility rests in a Pope and Council, let the term "Council" be rendered intelligible, that the conclusion may be final and decisive. Does it mean only the Cardinals residing in Rome, who, united with the Pope, can issue decrees obligatory on what they call the whole Christian world; or does it mean a General Council—that is, a Council composed of the Archbishops and Bishops of different countries, exercising episcopal juris-



diction in the respective dioceses over which they preside? If the term is to be understood in its first acceptation, then the Church of Rome, being the only Christian church which lays claim to infallibility as a *divine* and *special* gift to her *alone*, must support her pretensions by *express* and *uncontrovertible* evidence;—*then* a title must be produced coeval with Christianity, and of equal authority with the revealed and written word of Truth, in which the Pope (*so called*) and Roman Cardinals, as the members of his Council, must be *expressly* named and designated as the sole depositaries of this divine authority, and thereby empowered to issue such decrees as should not only be operative and conclusive, but also necessarily consistent and unimpeachable. The *actual* justice and *indispensable* obligation of such primary evidence is defensible on two grounds—human, and divine. On the former, as no record is impeachable, except by an instrument of as high a nature as that which is sought to be invalidated, and by which its errors can be detected, its provisions rendered inoperative, or its authenticity finally impeached: on the latter, as the existence of such a title must be inconsistent with, and subversive of, the truth of that Revelation which the mercy of Heaven vouchsafed to a guilty and perishing world. And as Infinite Wisdom and Mercy can never be contradictory or inconsistent, we must *absolutely* conclude, without even the

*possibility of disproof*, that the title under which the Church of Rome claims to derive its authority *must be false*, inasmuch as its exercise is *partial, restrictive, and subversive* of the great scheme of Gospel Salvation; and that the title under which the true believer claims (whatever his religious profession may be), viz. the revealed will of God as contained in the Scriptures of the New Testament, is general, comprehensive, *alone true*, and unimpeachable: the former title is, therefore, not only discredited, but *actually* extinguished. If the term "Council" is to be used in the latter sense, then indeed every national church, in common with the Church of Rome, is also infallible, and its decrees possess equal force and operation.

The first Council of Nice decreed the Divinity of Christ: the Council of Ariminum, with the Arians, decreed that Christ was not God! The Council of Constantinople decreed, that images *were not* to be suffered in Christian churches: the second Council of Nice decreed, that images *were not only* to be placed in churches, but also to be *worshipped*. The Council of Basil determined, that a Council was above the Pope: the Council of Lateran decreed, that the Pope was above a Council \* !

Hence deposition of one Pope, and election of another, decreed by the same Council. Hence two

\* Vide Bishop Jewell's Letter, in reply to Signior Scipio, a Venetian, concerning the Council of Trent, published in Brent's edition of that Council before stated.

or three Popes, as vicars of Christ, and *equally* infallible heads of the church, roaming about the world at the same time, evincing their Christianity by excommunicating each other; appealing alternately to the Laity, and furnishing such matter, both for ridicule and scandal, as to enable an abused and insulted world at length, to appreciate the origin and practice of the Papal authority\*. And though I freely admit that "Catholics" are not answerable for crimes committed by an usurped authority, at a remote period; yet I am clearly convinced, that they should not suffer Anti-catholic prejudices to gain such an ascendancy over true *Catholic* principles, as to compel them to bow the knee to that power, the respective periods of whose spiritual and temporal authority is so plainly and unequivocally marked and determined as to prove its pretensions to be as groundless as its exactions are arbitrary and oppressive.

If *Catholics* are really deserving of such an appellation, they will imitate the conduct of better and more auspicious times. They will not continue to recognize any foreign ecclesiastical authority; as such recognition would be *Anti-catholic*, and destructive of that constitutional liberty which, as members of a free state, they are entitled to enjoy, as the obedience which such assumed authority demands is *absolute* and *unconditional*,—degrading them by a mental bon-

\* Rapin's History of England, vol. iv. p. 377.

dage, at the very moment they are petitioners for the political power and privileges of the state, in which religious and civil liberty proclaim their principles, and unfold their value.

Your Lordship will, I doubt not, with true *Catholic* and *constitutional* principles, appreciate truth, wherever it can be discovered; and, with a mind soaring above the low and vulgar errors of sect or party, enforce, with patriot zeal, the actual necessity of identifying all classes of society into one common bond of union, by which the allegiance to be rendered to the Crown would be as *undivided* as the protection received is *impartial* and *extensive*.

Its necessity may be still enforced, by reflecting on the crimes and abuses which, under the sacred name of Religion, (even now, in this *enlightened* age,) are inflicted on the population of two neighbouring kingdoms, France and Spain; and, though the vicious policy of these kingdoms essentially differs from ours, yet the means by which the British Constitution has acquired its strength and maturity ought not to be abandoned.

No sacrifice is required, no condition proposed, inconsistent with genuine catholicity. The rights of conscience are not invaded. Nothing more is demanded than that no foreign ecclesiastical authority should interfere with, or be acknowledged

by, any of the subjects of these realms; or, that any episcopal jurisdiction, under colour of apostolical canons or constitutions, should be exercised *within* those realms, whose decisions should supersede or paralyze the operation of the laws.

*The extent of allegiance should be demarcated and prescribed by the supreme power of the State, to which, in the person of the chief magistrate, it is constitutionally due, and not by the party on whom it is obligatory.*

We will commence with the subjects of “Louis the *desired*!” Whether that state or individual is most secure where the king is above the laws, or the laws are above the king, is not a question of difficult solution. In the one case, the king (politically) can do no wrong; in the other, a king by *assumption*, and not by *compact*, though enfeebled by prejudices, and bending under the weight of superstitious observances, yet becomes, in the hands of bigotted and vindictive ministers, the unconscious instrument of national ruin. But, alas! the voice of wisdom did not reach his ears, otherwise France would have *enjoyed*, not *suffered*. Ministers could not then retain an instrument, but the people would have enjoyed the security of what by promise and by policy they were intitled to obtain—a *constitutional* king.

His immediate Predecessor — great even in

his crimes—he also was an instrument, but of a *far* different description.

He was doubtless the appointed means used by an avenging Providence, to scourge and purify a guilty world. He was permitted to make a discovery before unknown, *that power can exist unaided by superstition*. He crushed the monster, but did not destroy it. The salutary purposes for which power was conferred having been achieved, he was hurled from his unparalleled elevation—an awful spectacle of man's dependance and of Heaven's irresistible controul!

But in order to discover systematic and religious despotism in its full and meridian splendour, let us take a view of Spain; a theatre upon which many bloody tragedies have been performed, under the auspices and by the express command of “Ferdinand the well-beloved!” a country upon which Providence had amply conferred his favours, but where man has impiously perverted them — where the wreck of man is scarcely discoverable—where reason has expired, the animal alone survived; and the effect has been a moral devastation!

Let the Anti-catholics of these realms steadily contemplate this *unexaggerated* description, and then let them declare whether the *safety* of their religion ought to be secured by such *pious* and *zealous* exertions.

Whether the Irish Hierarchy will continue to reject that provision and support to which I before alluded, exceeds my powers of calculation to determine; but in the mean time it may be plausibly objected, that, as no ecclesiastical establishment is either desired or expected by them, it would be unreasonable to convert their *Christian humility and profession of voluntary poverty* into an argument against the capability of the Laity to the power and privileges of the State.

This objection, to carry with it its intended weight, proves too much: it is therefore as difficult to reply to as it is essential to examine it.

Admitting the purity of their pastoral characters to be without stain or blemish, it will not, however, be gravely contended that their influence over the Laity is not impressive and controuling; nor that their rejection of such intended support by the State was the pure result of motives spiritual, abstracted, and reversionary; for I may assert, without the gift of prophecy, that there are some unbelievers for whom such an opiate might be prepared, who would be *so profane* as to refuse to swallow what they could not possibly digest.

But if such rejection does not proceed from their conviction that the acceptance of *any* provision would operate as a bar to a more extended establishment; but that such agreement could be only nominally *final*, though *really prospec-*

*tive*; such delusion must then recoil upon themselves.

But if, in truth and in fact, their rejection arises *solely* from the inadequacy of such intended provision and support, which they might reasonably expect (on their performance of the required conditions) proportionably to increase as their influence and controul would eventually diminish; it is but justice to themselves, as well as to the State, to declare what compensation would be adequate to such a sacrifice, in order that provision might be as great, and security as decided, as their speculative and prospective hopes (if ever entertained) would be then visionary and vain.

The effect of such acquiescence would probably be the restoration both of the discipline and doctrine, as professed and practised, during the first five centuries of the Christian æra, when the Church, though not "Roman," was "Catholic" and "Apostolic."

If, however, this prospectus should be considered by the Irish Hierarchy as savouring too much of persecution; and such a proposal, a violation of the rights of conscience, *even* though not acceded to; I should be anxious to know what portion of religious liberty any association of Christians, residing in Spain, would be likely to enjoy, "who, after the manner that they call heresy, should publicly assemble to worship the



God of their fathers?" Would their religious liberty be so completely secured as to enable them confidently to anticipate more extended indulgence? Would they petition the *beloved* Ferdinand, and his *holy* Council, to be admitted into a participation of political power? Or rather, would not the proportion of punishment that ought to be inflicted on such heretics, and not the extent of privileges that should be conceded, become the real question for their *enlightened* discussion? Doubtless, much anxiety would be evinced for their *lost* and *unhappy* state: they would be *gently* and *mercifully* constrained to become members of the "true church," by the *persuasive* and *irresistible* arguments of the *most holy Inquisition*; or, if a member of the "true church" happened to stray from the fold, he would be sedulously sought for until found, and the joy evinced on his recovery would be only equalled by the deadly embraces which he might be certain to receive. If the Irish priesthood are anxious to discover the arguments used by the "beloved Ferdinand" to advance the state of religious liberty in Spain, I must refer them to two authentic documents\*, in which the pious labours of the Pope, the well-beloved Ferdinand, and of

\* 1. A proclamation by the king, dated Madrid, July 21, 1814; 2. By the bishop of Almeria, Madrid, April 5, 1815; inserted at the end of Limborch's History of the Inquisition, abridged. London, 1816. Vide Appendix.

many *learned* and *virtuous* prelates, for the *exclusive* protection of the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman Religion, are *equally laudable* and conspicuous. And after their perusal of these *pastoral* and *instructive* documents, I will make one request, which may, perhaps, be complied with; viz. that no commentary on their contents might appear, but that a profound and mysterious silence should be observed, as most becoming and conducive to their episcopal dignity: thus policy and religion may be both compatible, profane inquiry suppressed, and (as their only resource) the safety of their religion best consulted.

But let them seriously reflect on this indisputable fact, that the Pope and Council, which has sanctioned and confirmed what is impiously called, “the most holy Inquisition,” is the same *identical* authority to which those who are termed “Catholics” are bound to render supreme and unqualified obedience.

I would also recommend to the attention of the Irish priesthood, the pious labours and unwearied toils of his “holiness” in the spiritual vineyard, who has most *religiously* revived all the ancient splendour of the holy Roman Catholic worship; suppressed the Society of Free Masons, under the most rigorous penalties of process and confiscation; and, to complete his pastoral labours, has re-established the Order of the Jesuits;—a society which was not suppressed

until the year 1762, and then only after full debate, and on grave and protracted consideration; as seven years had expired before Pope Ganganelli and Council had closed their discussions, the result of which was their complete and total suppression.

Whether the original Bull of Suppression is, or is not, now deposited in the Pope's Chancery—or whether it has been cancelled, so as that it may never haunt the imagination of the present Pontiff—exceeds my ability to ascertain.

But of this there is sufficient evidence, that the causes which then were peremptory on a Pope and Council to decide, and upon which such Bull of Suppression was founded, arose from facts and circumstances disclosed in a course of a long and impartial inquiry, as the authenticated reports of those accredited agents of the Papal See who were officially appointed to collect and arrange that species of evidence upon which an impartial decision could be pronounced were collected and submitted to investigation, as demonstrably proved, that the principles and policy of the Jesuits, as taught and practised, were extremely injurious and highly dangerous to the peace and security of those countries in which they were permitted to preside.

Their suppression was not voluntary, but troubling. The security of every European State in which they resided had just cause for terror

and alarm, and enabled them to remonstrate, with success, *where*, formerly, they would in vain have solicited redress or compensation. And, though the limits of this letter will not permit a minute detail of the rise, progress, and dissolution of this celebrated order, yet a reference to the period of its institution will *virtually* establish the justice and equity of its suppression. The Order of the Jesuits was established in the year 1540, in the pontificate of Paul III, of which Ignatius Loyola was the founder, who chose, as Generals of the Order, Lanez and Aquaviva; men possessing the necessary requisites for such an intricate and complicated service. This Order was instituted about twenty-three years after the first broaching of heresies against the doctrines of "holy mother Church;" which innovation began by a profane examination of the doctrine of indulgences, and of the authority from whence they issued, by that *vile arch-heretic* Martin Luther, an obscure Augustinian Friar, in the University of Wittembourg, in Germany.

This *heresy*, however, of "doubt" and of "examination," had then increased, and was increasing to such a degree that some great exertions to preserve religion "pure and undefiled" became essential and indispensable. The Order of the Jesuits was therefore instituted, by whose *religious* and civil instruction the youth of that age were to be

rendered *impervious* to heresies, and whose official duties also extended to counteract the designs of their *enemies*, then numerous in Germany and other parts of Europe.

And really, if ever human ingenuity was conspicuous, it was at that peculiar crisis, when their exertions, under the specious but insidious pretence of enlightening and improving mankind, enabled the Papal power, through their instrumentality, to deceive the understanding, where they would not attempt to animate and improve the heart.

Subtle distinctions and metaphysical differences supplied, by casuistry and seduction, those means to attain the proposed ends which, during many calamitous centuries, had been effected by the plenitude of infallible authority. Light began, in some degree, to cheer and revive man's dormant faculties: hence the increased necessity of more subtle and refined instruction, to sap and undermine what they could not directly disprove or destroy.

The effects of this double heresy of "doubt and of examination" were, if possible, to be evaded, though the right of inquiry, and also of examination, remains *unimpeachable* to this present period. Hence *learning* was to be cultivated, but *knowledge* was to be neglected, or at least miserably perverted. Assumptions were to be received

as data not to be denied or disputed, upon which (by necessary and irresistible deductions) such a structure was to be erected as is falsely and injuriously termed “philosophy;” a vile imitation, indeed, of that true and genuine knowledge which, commencing by effect and experiment, as alone falling within the limits of a finite nature, proceeds by painful but progressive induction, leading from effect to cause, until the mind ascends to that Great Cause where calculation ceases, but where supreme adoration irresistibly begins.

Who among the members of this celebrated Order have been the real benefactors of mankind? Who amongst them, by their precepts and example, have enlightened the understanding and improved the heart? True it is, such society has produced orators, rhetoricians, metaphysicians, casuists, and divines; but (with the exception, perhaps, of the celebrated Paul of Venice) who is truly deserving of the title of “philosopher,” in its pure and genuine meaning? And, if we proceed from a review of its members to that of its effects and consequences upon nations as well as individuals, the warning voice of history will amply attest, that *policy* and *religion* were terms convertible and identified; their connection necessary and inseparable, and their uses and operations mutual and reciprocal;—the latter composing doubts or awakening pre-

judices; the former embracing and confirming those advantages which its faithful auxiliary enabled it to obtain, and confirm.

It is conceded, that the austerity of the Monk was laid aside; but enough was retained to acquire all the advantages which an insinuating address and studied exterior, impressive and not volatile, was qualified to produce.

And truly, if man's excellence were to be estimated by the punctuality of his movements, and by the extent of physical endurance to which he can be reduced, this Order must excite comparative admiration, when we consider, that all its members were compelled, previous to their admission, to take (in addition to the *three* vows of *poverty*, of *chastity*, and of monastic *obedience*, which are common to all orders of regulars,) a *fourth* vow\* of *direct* and *unqualified* obedience to the commands of the Pope, without reserve or equivocation; their guilt or innocence thus resting in contingency, depending upon the caprice or passion of the despot to whom they have become devoted instruments, not daring to reflect till crime

\* This oath is independent of those obligations inserted in the Appendix, respectively imposed on their Bishops and Clergy at the periods of consecration and ordination: William Rufus, therefore, told Archbishop Anselm, that he could not preserve his allegiance to him and his temporal sovereign at the same time.—Speed, pp. 441, 442.

is consummated by obedience; and then conscience must be composed by a fatal delusion, that an imperative, and *therefore* a *meritorious*, duty was performed.—Such is the character of that society now revived under the authority of the present Pope, with the assistance of his pious and learned council. And really, when we consider that its institution under Paul the Third was for the express purpose of supporting the authority of the Church of Rome, then in a tottering and precarious situation; that its institution was at first resisted, and would not have been permitted afterwards, had not its founder, Loyola, promised and secured, as an indispensable duty, indefinite obedience to all the arbitrary commands of the Church of Rome, and without requiring any thing from the “holy See” for their support\*; and that its suppression arose from the imperious necessity to which civil authority was reduced to save itself, either from ingenious artifice or from premeditated attacks generally undiscoverable, except by their effects;—we may, therefore, without incurring the charge of presumption, fairly infer, that the restoration of the Jesuits affords no proof that either civil or religious liberty will be increased or an enlarged, and comprehensive policy adopted.

Disclaiming even the idea of personal allusion,

\* Rob. Charles V. vol. iii. p. 190; *Compte rendu des Constitutions des Jesuits au Parlement*, par M. de Monclar, p. 285.



if we simply reflect on the three distinct periods of their origin, suppression, and restoration, and compare them with the respective causes which produced such events, we thereby obtain such internal evidence of their principles as may easily be *denied*, but *cannot* be *disproved*.

What instructive and impressive representations pass before the astonished senses almost from day to day! Let us again revert to France, where a species of moral decomposition was produced. A collision of discordant principles *unsettled* error, but did not confirm truth. Hence the difficulty superstition has to encounter in again consolidating (under the semblance of national advantage) into one compacted mass of impenetrable error, the jarring atoms of the state, that may for a season join, but never will amalgamate, where the king is an instrument, and his spiritual advisers, joined with some of the descendants of the old nobility, are agents; where a struggle between *liberty* and *slavery*, *truth* and *falsehood*, still continues; where each holds its alternate but precarious empire, unconscious of its destiny, but resolved on its pursuit; where the *abuse* of religion becomes essential to uphold power, by the *fascination* of the senses, and not by those legislative provisions of equity and justice upon which, as their legitimate basis, constitutional power ought to be erected.

Though her present rulers are not ignorant that

France (as was prophetically said by a celebrated writer\*) partakes of two natures—the monkey and the tyger; and that as the reassumption of her first shape and condition was as sudden as her original transformation was awful and terrific; yet self-love united with inveterate prejudice obscures their intellectual vision so much as to induce them vainly to expect what they are so anxious to realize—viz. that her first and original nature will remain unchanged, and be no longer liable to paroxysm or transformation.

But let them beware in time, as the spectre of Superstition, which for ages stalked abroad in giant form, will soon dwindle into a dwarf; and insulted Nature, invigorated by restraint, will at length burst those galling fetters which fixed her to the earth!

Surely if experience is calculated to make nations wise, these awful instances of *power abused* and *man insulted* are amply sufficient, if duly appretiated, to render every corner of the earth, where Superstition reigns, as enlightened as each would be then both great and happy.

Truly, my Lord, the more we consider the nature of what is called “Catholic Emancipation,” whether assisted only with the faculty of reason as men, or with superadded benevolence as Christians, in whatever shape or form this subject is presented to us, we ought ever to remember, “that

\* Voltaire.

charity, which thinketh no evil," lays no injunction upon the human faculties in their pursuit of truth, or in the detection of error; but it specially enjoins that such discretion should never subserve the purposes of malice or injustice.

"Homo sum, nil humani a me alienum puto," \* was the language of an heathen author; what then ought to be the sentiments and conduct of the Christian? Extending your views to the improvement and happiness of society, you must be anxious to heal the wounds of a distracted and degraded country: you will, therefore, I am satisfied, duly examine the nature of those respective remedies which have or may be submitted to your consideration, and will, unfettered by party or by prejudice, expect more decided benefit from what experience warrants, than from what a specious theory (raised upon an assumed perfection of which our nature is not susceptible) could possibly suggest.

If, in the ordinary course of human transactions, any plan or compact was proposed by which the individuals, as parties thereto, were to acquire and to receive mutual benefits, would they not (if actuated by sincerity and truth) bring forward every difficulty, and present every existing obstacle, in order, not only to obviate them, but, if possible, to perpetuate the intended compact, by

effectually removing the causes of future discordance? Would they not disclose their mutual doubts and suppressed apprehensions, that such might, if possible, be identified into mutual hope and well-founded expectation?

Would not this be the conduct which experience prescribes and justice approves? And as individuals are the component parts of states, the path of duty and of policy cannot be mistaken, if sincerity and truth are the ruling motives of the respective parties.

What is *substantially*, though not *nominally*, required from the legislative wisdom of the Constitution? *Nothing more than to abandon experience, and to rest on hope!* The reasons assigned to induce the Legislature to comply with this *moderate* request, by granting the prayer of the Catholic Petitions, are, that those dangers which formerly existed (and of course were admitted to be such by the recognition of their existence) cease and have determined.

If such expressions are only intended to disclose this fact; viz. that the avowed exercise of Papal authority has so far ceased to operate as *directly* to controul; I will admit their truth. But if they wear a prospective aspect, and are intended to convey an assurance that the principles upon which such power was founded are so changed and modified that danger could

not recur, though ability existed, I will reject the inference and deny the conclusion.

I am prepared to hear, that such language is *inquisitorial*; that none can fathom the motives of human action; and that it would be as impolitic as unjust to restrict, by an *ex-post-facto* law, "Catholics," from the power and privileges of the State, on account of the crimes of their ancestors, to which they were not accessaries, and for which they were not responsible.

This objection, like every other that has been raised against the practical principles of the Constitution, is merely plausible.

What does it amount to—viz. that we can only judge of motives by actions, and ought not to punish for crimes those who were incapable of committing them.

Admitted. But how can the present state of the "Catholics" of these realms be assimilated to that of persons subject to penalties for actions which, when committed, were not *mala prohibita*, but subsequently rendered so by legislative enactment? The theory of rights is applicable to all: the Constitution recognizes no personal distinctions—all are protected by equal laws—all are liable to equal penalties.

As original rights have been already discussed, the supposition of partial penalties, attaching only on distinct classes of the community, would be a

violation of the elementary principles upon which society rests and is founded; and therefore the assumption is as groundless as the belief of it would be criminal and unjust.

The Catholic Petition founds the policy of concession upon the absence of danger, thereby admitting, that if danger existed, concession would be impolicy.

Let us suppose, that the "Catholics" of Ireland had not *until now* petitioned the Legislature for a participation in the power and privileges of the State; and had made choice of this peculiar season, when foreign enemies no more assailed us, that they might obtain from the enlightened wisdom of Parliament, what their generous feelings could not suffer them to extort from weakness and imbecility. Would not such conduct imply a conviction that their claims were irresistible, if reason presided over their deliberations? If success should not realize their hopes, would it not be more equitable to impute its failure to the neglect of some previous conditions, or to some other inherent defect, of which they were not apprized, than to the ignorance or prejudice of this national tribunal.

Let them duly reflect, that *interested* can never be *dispassionate* witnesses; that claims can only be considered with reference to the Constitution, and not to that imaginary Republic which they first create and then attempt to realize.

And here the inverted question still returns, *not* what danger could ensue from concession, but what benefit, what increased security would follow the adoption of such a measure? That is the real question: for to estimate the policy of concession by its negative consequences would be just as reasonable as to expect accidents without a subject, or effects without a cause.

If principles exist, and doctrines are avowed, which are *now* only *speculative*, because sufficient power does not exist by which they could be rendered *practicable*; will political power, thus conferred, render the objects of it less capable of aggression, and the State who confers it more capable of resistance?

Will the mind be then more capable or willing to distinguish the spiritual subjection due to God alone from that spiritual vassalage, destructive of civil liberty, which is not only claimed by, but now rendered to, a creature?

Will success produce reflection, and convert the spiritual slavery which is endured under an assumed authority into that rational obedience which should be paid by freemen to another? Experience too clearly proves, that the retention of power operates more strongly on the mind than the pursuit of it; and that as its first impressions are confirmed by possession, so are its future prospects elevated and increased by hope.

Is it reasonable to expect, that legislation must

proceed on "Catholic" assurance, without appreciating "Catholic" motives, by weighing the experience of the past against the consequences of the future?

Is modern liberality calculated to enlighten, and experience only to dogmatize and obscure? What then is liberality? As I might fail in my attempt to define it, according to its improved signification, I must content myself with using the materials of which I humbly conceive it to be composed.

Liberality, then, I define, "*Enlightened action; the result of freedom from prejudice, adopted without doubt and retained without examination. It is a contempt of party, when founded on faction, though dignified with the name of Patriotism. It is the exercise of a sound and expanded mind, exploring truth, however obscured by time or disguised by artifice. It is such a detection of error, religious and political, as may arrest its course and prevent its consequences, by a discovery of its cause, and by an application of its remedy. Finally, it is a consecration of all its labours to the glory of God and to the happiness of man!*"

I am induced to hope, that the object of this address cannot be mistaken. It consists more in rendering real service to the majority of my countrymen, by directing their attention to the *means* by which they should attain the *end*; than to an excess of anxiety to avert their imputation of any



motives which should be unworthy of my judgment as a man, or of my benevolence as a Christian. If legislation really deserves the name of "science," it must be attained by the same process of observation and experiment, as is adopted in making useful discoveries in the material world; and in applying them, when made, to the various purposes of artificial society. It must proceed also, by the laborious process of moral analysis, to investigate human actions at various times, and under various circumstances; to compare and to combine them; to estimate their individual and aggregate effects, and to trace them to their native source—the mind; and there to develop its indelible character and real features;—to discover deformity, even in its best actions, and a preponderance of the animal over its rational and superior nature. *Unconscious* of danger, man is brave by impulse; but *conscious* of it, though the passion exists, he submits it to the direction of intellectual and moral principle, and thus acquires something assimilated to *freedom*; and perceiving its growth to be inversely as his self-controul, he *practically* demonstrates what the essential qualities of a legislator ought to be; and, by the aid of analogy, applies and extends them to the wants and necessities of social combinations.

This is political wisdom; but the theory of modern policy is of an Utopian and inverted order.

Our imperfect nature is bedecked with meretricious ornaments, and that *accommodating* patriotism (now so much revered) expires on the lips which never warmed or animated the heart.

Our country claims our service, not our flattery. We are not to *hope against hope*; but exertions should rise superior to ingratitude returned, or to obstacles presented to paralyze or oppose them: we should acquire new energies, and gather strength by progression: "*vires acquirit eundo.*"

It is an extraordinary and isolated fact, that the subjects of the Papal power are the only members of the Christian community who, since the assumption of its spiritual authority before mentioned, acknowledge themselves the subjects of a theocracy, whose power, though exercised on earth, can ascend to heaven; and though its subjects are numerous in those states where such a theocracy is not established, yet the original nature of that supreme allegiance which the paramount power demands, remains entire and unabated, incapable of change, impervious to diminution.

Where can a solitary instance be adduced, of any remonstrance against, or disobedience to, the commands of the Papal authority, however contradictory they may have been to that system of revelation which is acknowledged, even by such assumed authority, to be Divine?

How various the remonstrances against the ex-

ercise of constitutional power! How multiplied their complaints, that they were deprived of the benefit of that *liberty* which, as *freemen*, they were entitled to enjoy!

If the subjects of such a theocracy remonstrate against and oppose its commands, they necessarily deny its infallibility. If implicit obedience is rendered, they admit such power to be divine.

What complicated machinery must have been employed to produce and perpetuate such unparalleled power! True it is, the authors of this usurpation enjoyed some comparative light amidst the moral darkness which they intentionally raised around them, "least their deeds should be reprov'd." They were not ignorant how legislation ought to proceed: they well knew that man was subject to natural and acquired corruption; and that power, exercised in the promotion of human happiness, could only secure so invaluable a blessing, by invigorating reason, and thereby subjugating passion: but they were equally convinced, that the means by which our nature was to be improved, would be destructive of those pretensions which have since been realized.

The temptation was too violent to be resisted. Those seminal principles of our original and acquired corruption were cultivated and improved, not restrained or corrected. Error was

systematically engrafted on ignorance; and the entire devotion of the heart to this mysterious and usurped theocracy (which, if *infallible*, it justly claimed) rendered its power as unlimited as the slavery of its vassals was complete and permanent.

But to this statement it may be objected, that the duties of civil allegiance are clear and definite; and that no claim of the Papal authority either would or could militate against the performance of such prescribed duty; or, if the possibility of such a requisition could be admitted, spiritual allegiance would be *renounced* that civil allegiance might not be violated.

It requires little sagacity to discover, that the Papal power cannot be *fallible and infallible* at one and the same period. If it is urged that none of its commands were ever inconsistent with the duties of civil allegiance which the subjects of these realms are constitutionally bound to render and perform, that is a position which the evidence of impartial history is alone competent to decide. If the Papal power is admitted to be fallible; and *supposing*, but not *admitting*, that the duty of allegiance to the Church of Rome never did or could interfere with the duties of civil allegiance, and that the apprehensions of the Legislature on this subject were entirely groundless; yet it follows, that the required sacrifice of renouncing such an authority is merely *nominal*,

~~as~~ *such a renunciation could never violate the rights of conscience, which owes no spiritual allegiance to a temporal and fallible power, but to that great Being who is alone infallible, and consequently Divine.* If, however, the Church of Rome is considered *infallible*, who is to prescribe its limits, by distinguishing between what is “spiritual” and what is temporal, or thus attempt to define its boundaries? Is the creature to whom such command extends, competent to remonstrate or disobey? If so, from whom is submission to be expected? As the Papal power must be *Divine* if it is *infallible*, the necessity of comparing the command *enjoined* with the civil allegiance *plighted*, in order to determine whether obedience to such command should be absolute or conditional, must be as *criminal* as it would be *superfluous*; as every command of a Divine nature must be compatible with our duties as men, and with our *truest* happiness as Christians. If, therefore, a case ever *did* or *could* occur, where the commands of the Church of Rome *militated* or *militates* against the duties of civil allegiance, then infallibility ceases, and the requisitions of civil authority can no longer be objected to as *militating* against the rights of conscience.

It is not, therefore, so much a matter of surprise as of regret, that any legislative provisions should not produce their intended effects, whenever they oppose or impugn those principles

which are inculcated and enforced by an *unerring* authority.

And here the difficulty of rendering obedience to two masters cannot be too often reverted to. I have already shewn the peculiar situation of those subjects who are compelled to render a *divided* allegiance to two *opposite* and *contradictory* authorities: let us now consider the predicament in which Parliament must be placed, in the respective events either of concession or refusal.

Either the discussion of this great national question must proceed on similar principles to those on which Papal power was established, by reducing error to a precise and definite system; or it must proceed on a full conviction of natural and acquired depravity, with a fixed determination to correct and to restrain it.

On the first supposition, Parliament must suspend its deliberative functions, and perform, at least on this occasion, a *ministerial* duty, in registering substantially, though not nominally, the edicts of the Papal power; and thus, perhaps, the *complaints of a brave and loyal people, jealous of liberty, and ambitious of power and of privilege, may for some time cease and determine, as the slaves of the Papal power will be also the free and enlightened subjects of a constitutional government. Their respective natures will blend and harmonize, and slavery, united with obedience, will become essential to promote strength and to excite co-operation!*

On the latter supposition, deliberative wisdom will assume its dignified and appropriate station. Man will be viewed, not only as he is by nature, but also as sinking under the superincumbent weight of systematic error. He will appear in two opposite characters—(unconscious of his servitude)—as the advocate of liberty and the slave of despotism.

Deliberative wisdom may and ought to tolerate what it cannot reward. If it even faintly imitates “that wisdom which cometh from above,” its benevolence will appear as conspicuous as its justice. Those rights which by fixed and positive laws are sacred and inalienable, and which I have already discussed, will continue to be, as they have been, the especial objects of its care—the inflexible character of equal laws will know *no* distinctions; and justice, as heretofore, will be administered in mercy.

Such claims as these are *alone* irresistible; but legislative wisdom, not being exempted from the inseparable consequences of natural and acquired corruption, must, or ought, to feel too sensibly its own defects to call to its councils the aid of systematic error or visionary speculations.

Where, then, is the certain and solid basis to be found upon which those *enlightened* advocates of *error* and of *liberty* would erect the Temple of Concord, and upon whose altar they would sacrifice all jealous doubts and all perplexing fears?

Is legislation, like poetry, to wander amidst Arcadian scenes, and to amuse the senses whilst it corrupts the heart? Then, indeed, the labours and privations of our patriot sages, who read man by observation, and also examined him through the medium of history, "as philosophy teaching by examples," and who dedicated the fruits of painful and progressive inquiry to the service of their country, were bestowed and endured in vain; and that constitutional liberty, for which Hampden bled and Sydney suffered, must undergo the process of unnatural extension, to adapt it to the intrigues of faction or to the despotism of licentiousness. For where the human mind is restrained and subjugated under the pressure of one authority, its animal propensities will never be restrained by those constitutional limits which are prescribed by another.

Having already shewn the existence and effects of a divided allegiance, as the result of a belief in the infallibility of the Church justly impeached, and I trust clearly disproved, I will now assume the last possible objection that may still be urged against those principles which I have submitted to your Lordship's unbiassed judgment.

It may be urged, that concession will possess the property of conciliation, and that the possession of power and privilege is not required, but only a capability of enjoyment.

Let it be recollected, previous to my reply to



this objection, that the "Catholic" Petition is a question of *strict* policy, and not of *abstract* right. Let this truth be *felt*, not *verbally* acknowledged.

But will the *means* proposed be conducive to the *end* expected? Are principles to be changed and habits abandoned by the power of legislative magic? Or, if retained, how are they to assimilate with those principles which destroy mental bondage, and thus qualify man for the enjoyment of constitutional liberty, and render him the fit depositary of political power?

If conciliation is to be produced, it cannot proceed from concession as a *cause*, but from an *identity* of interests, as a *consequence*.

Where is such an identity to be discovered, or to what principle is it to be traced and imputed?

If all the subjects of a free government are equally capable of power and privilege, it is speciously urged that they will be equally zealous to support and to uphold it; and that conciliation will then be the inevitable consequence of concession. The assertion can be readily made—the proof to establish it not so readily furnished.

Who are to be conciliated? Perhaps it may be answered, The majority of the population denominated "Catholic Ireland." It is not now presumption to say that this plausible objection will lose its force, if we review man in his triple character; as he is by *nature*, by *acquired corruption*, and by *systematic error*. How certain is it,

that what is *theoretically* true, is too often *practically* false !

Self-deception is one of those wiles of Satan which is powerfully exerted to stimulate passion and to degrade reason. The sphere of its operations is not restrained to sect or party. All feel its influence and demonstrate its existence. But it receives an impetuous force when its character is changed from the indulgence of a passion, and converted into a duty to be blindly rendered to an authority erected upon human ruins, reigning in mysterious grandeur amidst the moral gloom with which it is surrounded.

Too anxious for the real interests of my country to confer unmerited eulogium, I am satisfied to receive censure, if I shall be enabled to administer relief, though the "Priest and the Levite may pass to the other side."

If a capability to enjoy political power and privilege is desirable, much more so the possession and consequent enjoyment.

The title *without* the possession, would be as *impolitic* to give as it would be *unjust* to withhold. If mere capability is suggested as sufficient to satisfy the majority of my countrymen, without the *enjoyment* itself, then, truly, self-denial becomes a catholic virtue, and the forbearance of the Monk may appear more prominent than the wisdom of the politician.

If the Petition is thus moderated in order to

produce only a barren and unproductive concession; is nothing more contemplated, when so little is expressed?

If it is a sound and virtuous policy to confer honours and to confide power to any class of subjects to whom such distinctions had not been previously extended, the same policy would suggest the wisdom of conferring them, in the true spirit of sincerity and confidence, as present benefits, and not as precarious hopes.

If the "Catholics" of Ireland are conscious that they can support the venerable fabric of the British Constitution by *enlightened* counsel, why profess such moderation as requires only a capability to afford at a remote or indefinite period that sage advice which its necessities may so speedily require?

It is a weak and narrow policy for the respective parties,—viz. those who possess power, and those who are anxious to partake of it—to suppress the great and primary principles by which this question must be ultimately decided; and to skirmish about pins and particles, calculated only to produce delay, and to excite irritation.

It will be admitted, that the possession of power and privileges could extend but to a few individuals, when compared with the population from whence they might be selected; but it may, perhaps, be urged, that though such distinctions might necessarily be restricted, yet that a capability of

receiving them, would be gratifying to the “Catholics” of Ireland, whose ingenuous feelings have been hitherto violated by *illiberal* and exclusive distinctions.

It is my anxious wish, as it is my imperative duty, to elevate and improve; not to degrade or insult my country.

The major part of its population, *hitherto patients only*, are, therefore, undeserving of censure; and intitled to unwearied attention; as they possess natural faculties capable of high moral improvement.

If I considered the case of Ireland hopeless, I might *silently* bewail her misery, but would never *publicly* proclaim her distress. Remedies would not be prescribed, if benefits were not *confidently* anticipated.

My remarks are applicable to her past and present condition, and not to her presumed inability to recover from it.

If the majority of what is denominated “the Catholics of Ireland” were truly capable of appreciating the nature of civil liberty, the purposes and qualities for which power ought to be confided, and privileges conferred; they must then be in the full and unrestricted enjoyment of reason and reflection, submitting to no human authority *whatever*, but to the laws; and evincing their *practical* knowledge of the value of constitu-

tional liberty, by an anxiety to maintain and to preserve them.

Is it necessary to inquire whether such is their real situation? Will it be contended, that those whose reason is so debased and subjugated as to suffer the sacred Charter of Truth (the Scriptures), by which they might be "free indeed," to be for ever closed against them; or perverted, and then promulgated by an interested and usurped authority;—can it be gravely argued, that those who submit to an *indefinite* and *unqualified* power, can possibly appreciate the genius and character of rational liberty—can feel its value, or defend its cause?

Once more cast a glance upon *divided* and *degraded* France, and upon *priest-ridden* and *besotted* Spain; and there discover, if you can, any affinity between mental bondage and constitutional liberty.

True it is, the parallel with Ireland fails in *extent*, but differs only in *degree*. In the former, the power is directly exercised; in the latter, the principles are retained.

It may yet be urged by the *liberal* and *enlightened* advocates of "*Catholic*" Ireland, that it would be as irrational as unjust to anticipate evils which may never happen, and which policy as well as principle would unite to counteract and to defeat.

Here again, the inverted order of legislation is resorted to. The excellence of legislation does not consist in assuming principles, and reasoning from them : it consists in making that choice (out of the many evils with which we are surrounded) which experience warrants as least injurious and most beneficial; that choice most corrective of natural and systematic prejudice; that choice best calculated to exalt and improve our nature.

Concession, therefore, should result *from conviction founded on experience*, not from *spurious patriotism* or from vacillating or temporising fears.

Legislation is a high and imperious duty, requiring all the energies of head and heart; involving a sacred trust to be performed, not a sinecure to be either ostentatiously held or profitably enjoyed.

As legislation *cannot* proceed “a priori,” neither ought its deliberations ever to originate from low and sordid motives such as these; viz. What is the *extreme* proportion of revenue that can be *extracted* from the subject, or of power that can be exercised over him? as sound policy teaches, that the extreme point of physical endurance ought not to be too scrupulously calculated; but legislation should extend to higher and more important objects.

*The morality of a state demonstrates its justice;*

*and if it is not esteemed as primary and indispensable, penalties become the consequence, rendering the authority from whence they issue virtually necessary to the crimes against which its power is directed.*

Let the principles of toleration be as extended as the immortal Locke has described them, whose enlightened mind clearly proved that toleration was the inseparable *consequence* of political wisdom, *not its cause*.

He was truly anxious for the welfare of the whole human race: his works attest it, and his commendation of the "Truth," in conformity to the principles he promulgated, seals and confirms it. Speaking of the Scriptures, he says; "They have God for their author, heaven for their object, and truth, without any mixture of error, for their contents."

Toleration is a Christian duty — power a human privilege. The former is enjoyed—the latter is expected.

Toleration is a right not to be invaded by any *Christian State*, without a forfeiture of that high and distinguished title. Where the rights of conscience are invaded, there the sovereigns of such states may be addressed as "most Catholic" or "most Christian;" but the vivifying principle has expired: they become *Anti-Christian* and *Anti-catholic*; and their subjects are *slaves*, not *freemen*.

Toleration is a debt due by the State, and paid on demand, *ex debito justitiæ*, to the subject.

This obtains in every country truly "Catholic," where the empire of the laws, founded on the immutable principles of moral obligation, is *exclusively* recognized and acknowledged.

Toleration may be considered also with reference to the doctrines of those to whom it is extended; for though it is a debt of right, however erroneous such opinions may possibly be, provided they are purely speculative, yet, in this point of view, such doctrines and principles are only to be examined *prospectively*—that is, in such a way as to enable the Legislature to ascertain whether those to whom such toleration is *now* extended would be *also* fit depositaries of political power. In the first case, justice (perhaps exceeding the limits which the great Apostle of Toleration prescribes) is freely rendered: in the latter, neither the letter nor spirit of toleration can be violated; as such inquiry must necessarily be of a *negative*, not of a *positive* nature: and as the labours of the legislature should be more directed to the acquisition of public happiness and security than to the confirmation of superinduced error, the inquiry should not turn on the absence of danger, but on the production of benefit; otherwise its members must legislate on *chance*, and console themselves with "the pleasures of hope." Two remedies—the



one radical and conclusive, the other predisposing and conditional—will be suggested as the *only* means by which what is called “Catholic Emancipation” can possibly be conceded; and, in order to urge the nature and enforce the application of these respective remedies, I will severally address two orders of men;—the bishops and subordinate pastors, and the higher classes of the “Catholics” of Ireland;—and conclude with a recapitulation, accompanied with some remarks for your Lordship’s peculiar consideration.

Previous to my address to the Clergy, I feel myself peculiarly called upon to declare in the face of my country, that I disclaim the most distant idea of personal aspersion. My motives (I can with sincerity appeal to Heaven) are general, controuling, and imperative; and have for their direct object the true interests of my country, and for their more extended object the happiness of man and the prosperity of nations. It may, however, be urged, that this prospectus is too comprehensive; that it attempts to give an importance to a subject of which it cannot be *generally* susceptible. If the principles on which I have imperfectly reasoned, and from which I have drawn my conclusions, were *local* and *restricted*, the objection would be insuperable; but as man’s nature proclaims and revelation confirms them, we may by analogy to the material world, anticipate

from a due application of such principles, the beneficial consequences which must rise and extend to the high level from whence they proceed.

My attacks (though apparently personal) will be directed only against the Papal system, under which the Clergy are vested with ministerial authority; conscious as I am that the discipline and doctrine which I condemn, they would consider themselves criminal if they did not implicitly believe, sedulously inculcate, and vigorously enforce.

You profess to be ministers of light, and not of darkness; you profess to believe that the Scriptures are written under the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit, and that they are authentic and divine. As you profess a belief in the truth of the whole Record, you must necessarily give equal credit to its respective parts.

"Search the Scriptures\*," was the express injunction of their great Author. You will therefore admit, that *as* the Scriptures were able to make Timothy "wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Jesus Christ;" and for the knowledge of which, from his infancy, the Apostle Paul highly commends him; *so* they proclaim the same comfortable assurance to all those who humbly and sincerely meditate on, and carefully peruse them. And that this Apostle gives a general direction to all professing Chris-

\* John v. 39.

tians “to prove all things, and to hold fast that which is good;” the same credit must also be given to that passage of Scripture where Paul, apprehensive of future corruptions, directs a salutary caution to the Colossians, in these words: “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ; for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily: and ye are *complete* in him which is the *Head* of all principality and power\*.” And the language of another Apostle is of equal authority, who, having previously warned believers of the doctrines and character of those who would endeavour to seduce them, goes on to say, “But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you; and *ye need not that any man teach you*: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is *no* lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him†.”

These quotations are not captiously selected, but candidly extracted from that sacred volume, proceeding from the authority of *Him who cannot lie*; and are demonstrative of two eternal truths—viz. that Christ is the *supreme* and *exclusive Head* of the church; and that his supremacy is so full and sufficient, that all true believers are *complete* in Him. And, as every professing Christian,

\* Colos. ii. 8, 9, 10.

† 1 John ii. 27.

without distinction or difference, is directed to "search the Scriptures," and informed that *they* are "sufficient to make men wise unto salvation;" so are they equally assured, that if they bring their wandering and sinful thoughts to the Scriptures, and make them the rule by which their judgments are to be exercised, and submit to their teaching, that "the word" will come with power into their hearts, and that they will receive such an unction from the Holy Spirit as not to require the anointing or *teaching* of any man.

Let it not be supposed, that the ministry of the word would be thus superseded and rendered unnecessary. Far from it; the Apostles declared "they could do every thing *for* the truth, but not *against* the truth." If vanity or presumption urged me to obtrude my crude and imperfect opinions as unerring truths, and attempted to raise a crazy and tottering edifice upon such an unstable basis, my folly would excite more pity than my crime reprehension; but the materials I have used are not only sufficient to quiet such apprehensions, but have also enabled me already to expose the miserable pretensions of "infallibility," with its pernicious fruits, upon principles that are *true*, *not* upon assumptions that might be disproved.

I shall, therefore, make an appeal to your consciences, in order to excite remorse for your adherence to a system which holds the belief of

*another head, besides that in which we are complete, as the head of all principality and power. .*

The discharge of your episcopal and subordinate duties involves two great and opposite consequences. If you are *not* "lords over God's heritage," but "ensamples of the flock;" if, as "pastors," you follow the advice of the Apostle Peter, and *truly* "feed the flock of Christ;" then, indeed, such seals are affixed to your ministry as *must* evince that Christianity is not a mere profession, nor morality an empty sound.

If, however, you *are* lords over God's heritage, and *not* ensamples of the flock; if you *starve* the flock of Christ, and withhold even from the poorest and most benighted member of your flock, that "bread which endureth unto eternal life," then you injure the cause of Christianity more by your profession than by your actual renunciation.

Morality may be inculcated, and loyalty enforced; but if you will not permit them to explore their legitimate and genuine source—the Scriptures; your charity will avail no more than "a sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbol."

The "Catholics" of Ireland, at one period, conceived the preposterous idea of forcing the passages of the Constitution that led to power and to privilege as *a right*, without requesting it as a favour;—but had they reflected on the right which you withhold, by the detention of the Scriptures; had their eyes been opened to discover

the value of that liberty which the possession, united with the right, would confer; then, indeed, their recovery must have been inevitable; and *real* emancipation become the *glorious* consequence.

If you can seriously believe that you are “ambassadors of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God,” reflect on the nature and extent of those duties you are called upon to perform; and remember, that the very essence of your duty consists “in doing every thing *for* the truth, but not *against* the truth,—that the undivided energies of your minds should be rallied to support its cause,—and that, in the capacity of ambassadors, you ought to entreat and beseech your respective flocks (who gather around you to catch wisdom from your lips), “in God’s name to be reconciled unto God.”

If such are indispensable duties, how can they be performed with justice to yourselves, or with benefit to your hearers, if you are *compelled* mercilessly to retain, and withhold *that record* by which alone such reconciliation can be effected?

Will you, if conscious of being thus invested, solemnly declare, and expect to be believed, that the *perusal*, or hearing of the Scriptures read by others, could be dangerous *to the most ignorant or illiterate*, when you are informed by the *same unerring authority*, that they are profitable to all? If you *profess* to believe, that the Scriptures con-

tain the words of eternal life, do you not furnish decisive evidence to impeach the sincerity of that belief, by your resistance to their plain and positive commands?

If you only profess *generally* to believe the Scriptures, and conceive that "the Church" has an inherent power and privilege to *fit, accommodate, and render subservient* to the purposes of "infallibility," those very Scriptures, written under the influence of the Eternal Spirit; then reflect on the awful consequence of supporting a foreign spiritual jurisdiction, which constrains you to add the crime of hypocrisy to that of infidelity.

And if ye reflect also on the mutilated and deformed condition in which ye are compelled to deliver the Scriptures to the chosen few who are permitted to peruse them, ye furnish still stronger evidence of mere external profession.

An examination of part of the following passage, out of many that could be quoted, together with an explanatory note, inserted in the Rheims edition of the New Testament, fully illustrates this assertion:—"Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats\*." "This first injunction," says the Note, "cannot apply to our church, as marriage is one of its sacraments; and, as to the latter, it only applies to a certain description of sectarists which the Apostle had then in contemplation."

\* 1 Tim. iv. 3.

I have quoted the text correctly, and the note substantially. If I have used either unfairly, the remedy will, doubtless, accompany the inclination to detect me.

The Apostle, in this chapter, is describing the erroneous doctrines which were to spring up in the church of Christ, *not* those that had or then existed; and that such was his plain intention, the first words of this chapter fully proves: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times, some shall depart from the faith:" and having enumerated the character and conduct of those by whom her purity would be sullied and obscured, he then goes on to advert to those erroneous doctrines now quoted; "Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats;"—and concludes the recital of them, by instructing Timothy in the duties of the ministry in which he was engaged, in these words: "If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained."

Here, then, it is evident that the Apostle's observation was made to Timothy, in order to urge him, as a faithful minister, to preserve his flock *as they then were*, by warning them of the dangers to which, in the latter days, the church of Christ would be exposed, and the delusions by which she would be assailed.



Besides, celibacy, as an error *then* existing, could *not* by possibility be in the Apostle's contemplation, as the injunction of celibacy was not imposed on the clergy by the Church of Rome for many centuries after this Epistle had been written to Timothy.

Conscious as the Church of Rome was that the injunction of celibacy would not bear to be tried by the Scriptures, it was necessary to curtail the text, and then illustrate it by an explanatory note; as some effort was required to neutralize, by *collateral aid*, the plain import of words thus prophetically pronounced, that the Scriptures might not substantially impeach such contradictory doctrines as are now enforced and inculcated.

As to the latter clause, "and commanding to abstain from meats," *neither* could such an injunction be contemplated by the Apostle as an error *then* existing, as such an error was not even known, much less imposed by human authority as a doctrine to be believed, and as a discipline to be obeyed for many centuries after, when, during a long and dreary night of moral darkness, "an enemy sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way."

It has been truly said, that "conscience makes cowards of us all." Its truth peculiarly appears in the anxiety evinced by this explanatory note, that such an imputation as that of maintaining the

doctrine of celibacy should not be charged upon the Church of Rome, conceiving that such charge could not be sustained if marriage was admitted into the number of her sacraments\*.

But on what principle of reason, or by what authority of Scripture the laws of nature and of justice are to be extended to the laity, and denied to the clergy, I am not sufficiently learned in theology to fathom or explore.

But history, the faithful mirror of human actions, exhibits the injustice and impolicy of this partial decision, by detailing its fatal consequences, and proving that vice is ever more formidable, as being less discoverable, where sanctity is identified with the person, whether as an episcopal or subordinate sinner.

You are not required to attempt any defence either of your discipline or doctrine, as “by their fruits ye shall know them.” They must either decay or flourish as they may want or possess that *vis vitæ*, or living principle, without which (if not *practically* injurious) they can at best be but mere husks, and from which *good cannot proceed*; but you are solemnly required to consider whether you will obey God or man;—whether you will oppose *human* to *Divine* authority.

You are called upon to deliver up the possession of the holy Scriptures to those for whose use Heaven mercifully intended them—that treasure,

• Vide Appendix.

“ the Pearl of great price,” which, under the semblance of Divine pretensions, has been artfully concealed, studiously withheld, and intentionally perverted.

You are impressively required not to persevere in a *compacted* and *systematic* opposition to the truth; and to reflect on the awful consequence of prohibiting or denominating *that* dangerous which *Heaven* has proclaimed to be *so* salutary (to *all without respect of persons*) as to “make men wise unto salvation.”

No human sophistry, under any possible colour or pretence, can evade the force of this *imperious* requisition.

Health and liberty may be abused; but does it follow that they are not essential and indispensable? If this assumed power is so anxious to procure a “church without spot or wrinkle,” why not use equal circumspection, lest the images or memories of departed “saints” (vainly distinguished, as *honoured* but not *adored*), might not become the means by which its votaries would fall into idolatry; and why *still* uphold the doctrine and allow the use of indulgences (*under any pretence*) that might be *mistaken* for a licence to commit sin?

Is a great portion of the Christian world indebted to the Church of Rome, for averting those evils which the possession and use of the Scriptures are *falsely* and *cruelly* suggested to produce?

Is it to be conceived, that, in an age denominated “liberal and enlighten’d,” such a plea as this could possibly be endured, when we reflect that those very interdicted Scriptures were written under the inspiration of the Eternal Spirit, and intended as a universal balm and cordial for corrupt and guilty man? You are therefore *peremptorily* required, by your *indispensable* and *exclusive* allegiance to their great Author, to proclaim the free use and undisturbed possession of the Scriptures, as a *right*, and not as a *favour*, to the “Catholics of Ireland.”

As you are *professors* of loyalty, you cannot prove your sincerity more effectually than by your co-operation in circulating the word of truth, and thereby contributing to realize the gracious hopes of our venerable sovereign, who wished to live until the poorest man in his dominions possessed and could read his Bible;—an expression as worthy of transmission to future ages, as it was descriptive of those parental feelings he ever evinced for the morality and happiness of his people, and whose life was the best commentary on the value of that truth with which he was so anxious *all* should be impressed.

No plea or subterfuge, that such a requisition would be repugnant to and subversive of “the authority of the church,” can possibly avail, unless you are enabled to produce a title by which lectures on morality and loyalty may be delivered,

though that *high* authority (from which alone both morals and laws must originally proceed, and on which they are founded) may be opposed and impeached.

The effects of such instruction have been too *fatally* felt and too *long* endured.

You are *not* accused of directing your flocks to disobey the Divine authority; but you are accused of preventing, by your instrumentality, their obedience to its requisition from their ignorance of the Divine will.

You are *not* accused of either propagating immorality or of disseminating sedition; but you *are* accused of withholding those *means* by which the principles both of morality and loyalty could be *duly* and *individually* investigated.

You are accused of reducing your respective flocks to such a situation as to render it impossible for them to comply with the directions of the Apostle Peter, from whom you claim a lineal descent: "And be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear."

I anticipate the physical necessity under which you are compelled to sustain a foreign jurisdiction, destructive of the vital interests of your country: and though your duties are mostly of a passive and *ministerial* nature, yet I am anxious to presume that your motives may be pure and your intentions honest (these I cannot explore);

but the value of your pastoral labours are only to be estimated by their effects.

If your doctrine and discipline will bear the light, come to that light, either that the system you defend may be vindicated, or "that your deeds may be reprov'd."

There is no middle course. If the Scriptures are against you, Pastors, ye must also be against the Scriptures, though "wise in your generation" in withholding them. If the Scriptures are not against you, Pastors, then your proclamation that they are the right and property of *all* must as *necessarily* be published as *effect* follows *cause*.

It may be inquired, who is to determine this question—viz. the competency of the parties to interpret those Scriptures thus anxiously desired to be distributed.

My answer is, Circulate the Scriptures pure and unadulterated; and an humble supplication for Divine assistance previous to their perusal, by each individual, will, upon the authority of *Him that cannot lie*, render such Scriptures "sufficient to make them wise unto salvation," (and more than this, I presume, even infallibility would not aspire to), and, will also enable them to discover, by comparing their past instructions with that unerring standard which they will then possess and enjoy, whether their boasted light had not been *emphatically* "darkness."

I am fully apprized of the melancholy and

wretched perversions that have been too successfully employed to sophisticate "the simple truth;" as, that, admitting God's word to be infallible, yet, if by God's word was meant the written letter of Scripture, such an expression was nonsense if applied to a book, which cannot judge at all, but is only applicable to such persons as have a *judging power*; and where is that judging power, say they, to be found, if not in the "infallibility of the church?"

My answer is contained in the repetition of that assurance, given by inspiration, that the Scriptures, read and examined with a dependence on the Divine blessing *alone*, are fully "*sufficient* to make men wise unto salvation."

If this answer will not be admitted as conclusive, *no other can*. The reason, therefore, of declaring that the doctrines of the "church" must be received without *doubt* or *examination*, is evidently manifested.

The happiness and security of a state depends upon the propagation of true religion, or the written word, pure and undefiled, whatever abstracted notions or shallow expedients may otherwise be indulged, and relied on. With it, there can be *no* danger. Without it, legislation is mockery, and patriotism fraud.

When Peter and the other Apostles were apprehended and brought before the Jewish Council, Peter boldly declared "Christ to be a Prince

and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins \*.” Upon this apostolic declaration, they took counsel to slay them; when Gamaliel, a Doctor of the Jewish Law, and of high reputation amongst them, then said, “Refrain from these men, and let them alone; for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it, lest haply ye be found to fight against God.”

The conduct of the Jews then, is applicable to that of all persecutors since and *now*, as illustrated in the state of France, Spain, and Portugal; but in these more favoured realms, the inclination might be ardent and sincere, but the power is *providentially* restrained.

Reflect seriously on your conduct, as to its motive and consequences, and deliberately consider that the Scriptures ye are required to restore and circulate, contain those *identical* truths which Peter and the other Apostles then publicly professed and taught; and so fully impressed were they with the sense of this paramount duty, that they previously said, before the same council, though surrounded with enemies and loaded with accusations, “We ought to obey God rather than men†.”

If such was their duty and their privilege *then*, what ought to be your duty and your privilege

\* Acts v. 31.

† Acts v. 29.



*now?* Can you claim descent from the Apostle Peter, and disobey that Master whom he truly served?

If the Scriptures are dangerous, they can become so *only* to those who oppose and resist them; then truly, instead of being “a savour of life unto life,” they will be “a savour of death unto death.”

Consider dispassionately, whether you are now members of the same “Catholic” Church, in doctrine and in discipline, as it existed during the first five centuries of the Christian æra.

*If you are*, and if its catholicity must be conceded to be *then* unquestionable, you will not *necessarily* continue to recognize the spiritual controul of that power, whose episcopal or spiritual jurisdiction did not *then* extend to the limits of what was subsequently and *poetically* styled “the patrimony of St. Peter.”

You are not required formally to recant errors; you are not required to declare that the king is the head of the church; but you are required to abjure all foreign authority or jurisdiction in ecclesiastical matters within these realms.

You justly appreciate the necessity of compelling restitution to be made (*ex cathedra confessionis*) to the injured party, of any property which may be fraudulently taken and clandestinely retained; and generally refuse to give absolution whilst restoration is withheld, and until

the claims of justice (incapable of proof in a temporal court) are fully satisfied, requiring the offender to discharge his conscience of the increased guilt of suppression, before it can be healed by spiritual pardon. If the demands of human justice are so inexorable as to require (by the self-accusation of the delinquent, through your agency) compensation for the fraudulent detention of that which is comparatively of *no* value, what compensation can the *master you serve* make to a famished population for the plunder and detention of that bread which endureth unto eternal life?

Ye stand upon an awful precipice. This is no time for solemn trifling. Do not attempt to evade by sophistry, what you cannot disprove by argument. If you *fancy* that you are "feeding your flocks," sedulously inquire whether ye are not deceiving yourselves.

This advice, though *offensive*, is as *liberal* as it is *true*. Its *converse* might be pleasing, and would perhaps be deemed also "*liberal*;" but it would really be as illiberal as it would be cruel, false, and spurious.

Remember also, that "loyalty," to be efficient either in the *professor* or the *pupil*, must spring from its *pure* and peculiar *source*, the Scriptures, to which each should be enabled to repair in order to derive those salutary lessons of supreme

obedience which is due to God *alone*, and also to discover the nature of that civil obedience which is due to temporal and subordinate authority—how, according to the direction of the apostle Peter, ye are “to fear God and honour the king.” *Slavery* may produce a deceptive calm, but *rational obedience* can alone ensure tranquillity.

The present appeal, made to your justice and your consciences, cannot, I should hope, prove unproductive. Its success or failure must determine whether ye prefer *truth to falsehood*, or *liberty to bondage*.

Ye are not compelled to make a choice of evils; but to choose *exclusively* that which is *supremely good*.

Oh, reflect, if you can, upon the indefinite value of that treasure which you still retain, calculated to effect what legislation can never achieve; and if the compunctious visitations of alarmed conscience can excite remorse, listen to her still and silent voice, and by one act of imperious justice blot from the memory the wrongs of ages!

If the indispensable duty which is now prescribed should be faithfully performed—viz. the restoration of the Scriptures to the Catholics of Ireland, together with the consequent proclamation that such property belonged to them by right, and not by favour, as I before stated; as also an absolute renunciation of the Papal juris-

diction, then indeed the road to power and to privilege lies strait open to all the members of your respective flocks.

But if ye prefer a devious and intricate course, and expect to effect by profession what you could secure by performance, then your ingenuity ought to increase as difficulties gather around you.

Those inquiries which *shallow* presumption may condemn, in this *enlightened* age, as *illiberal* and *irrelevant*, will then become *necessary* and *indispensable*.

You cannot possibly be ignorant of the various opinions formerly, and still, subsisting as to what constitutes a general council, and the manner in which it ought to be convened.

How many general councils were ever assembled, and whether a council, in its most extended sense, ever was or could be held, are questions still vague and indefinite, and which "the infallibility" of the Church (doubtless for weighty reasons) has not yet decided.

Whether the Virgin Mary was conceived in original sin or not ; whether a king may, for heresy or disobedience to the Church, be deposed or not ; are questions of no ordinary character ;—and yet the first question was advocated and opposed for nearly three centuries, and your general councils, though aided by infallibility, have to this day left it undecided ; and as to the latter

question, the popes and many of the Catholic Church, for nearly six centuries, whilst inclination was supported by power, maintained that they might be deposed, and proved their sincerity by correspondent action, as may be collected from the decision of the Lateran Council, which held that such princes as would not extirpate heresy might be deposed.

Some catholic writers hold the affirmative of this question, and consider it an article of faith;—others, it is true, condemn it as an impious error. Which are heretics? And of what value is this boasted infallibility to human happiness, which has not yet finally renounced, though it has directly decided, a question of vital importance to the existence and security of society. Whether faith should be kept with heretics may, in these realms, be *now* considered as a doctrine, never even discussed, much less promulgated, by the Church of Rome; though the practical commentaries which have been latterly made on this doctrine, in countries most Catholic and most Christian, to support the negative of this question, induces a belief that as such doctrine is not expressly *renounced*, it may (where power exists) be virtually confirmed.

If political power and privilege should be still pursued, recollect that the success of the laity must depend upon your ability to prove, by primary and authentic evidence, that all the doctrines

imputed to the Church of Rome, injurious to the security of constitutional liberty, as upheld by some and denied by other councils, are now not only *not* recognized but *formally abrogated* and *condemned* by an *authority equal to that by which* they were previously *imposed* and *confirmed*, and which authority or council is the present standard of catholic orthodoxy.

Consider well what the language of unerring truth is: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Legislation, therefore, to be *conclusive*, must be also *preventive*.

Perhaps, if you should reflect on the various obstructions which a crooked policy must eventually produce, you will at length perceive the true wisdom of pursuing that obvious course which is direct and open, without difficulty and without resistance. Recollect your compliance would be truly *catholic*, because it would be truly *Christian*.

Cunning and wisdom are direct contraries: and though you may be better casuists than divines, and abler logicians than statesmen, yet it may be useful to apprise you, that legislation (to deserve the name) acts on *practical* principles, and not on verbal distinctions; that *professions* are not *proofs*; that policy may (and, if of a Machiavelian nature, will) conceal whatever is subversive of future hope or present enjoyment; and that, if such doctrines were now avowed which were formerly maintained and practised, they would not only

for ever close up the path to honours and to power, but would justly involve you in those consequences which the immortal Locke has clearly proved, on principles of self-defence, to be both just and necessary.

It may be also advisable to reflect, that though the purity of your faith (which ye so zealously profess) must not only be questioned but denied, until you bring that faith for trial to the ordeal of the Scriptures; yet if the variance is now merely speculative, and could not by the acquisition of power become *practically* injurious, then, in such case, the difficulty of compliance would necessarily diminish, and your present expectations would only be delayed until you produced a renunciation (authenticated by the "infallible" authority of a pope and general council) of all those doctrines which were either held by, or imputed to, the Church of Rome, in order to silence doubt and to establish confidence.

This alternative you must be reduced to if you reject the application of the first radical and catholic remedy proposed; viz. a restoration of the Scriptures, and a renunciation of the papal authority.

Supposing, but not admitting, that those objectionable doctrines, which ye may *now* admit and profess to be impious and heretical, were never formally recognized by what ye might consider as a competent authority; yet if such doctrines were ever avowed, or acted upon, how-

ever *partially* or *indirectly*, by any of the members of an infallible church, which professes such a unity of doctrine as to continue *immutable* at all times and under all circumstances\*, the necessity of negating the existence of such injurious doctrines by *indisputable* proof is so imperious as to place the very existence of infallibility (exclusive of its various disprovals, already adduced) on the issue of the existence of such doctrines being satisfactorily negated.

Any Christian society where the governing power claims *no* infallibility cannot possibly be answerable for the various doctrines which its respective members may maintain. But as the Church of Rome boasts that her doctrines are both divine, and necessarily immutable at all times and in all places, it follows, that when such unity is impeached by facts not yet disproved, either that such will be completely and unequivocally disproved, or that unity of doctrine will be disavowed and infallibility admitted to be no longer tenable; for if unity of doctrine amongst its members is not discoverable at all periods, what advantage can they possibly possess over the members of any other Christian communion, which lays *no* claim to such unwarranted pretensions? Any disclaimer or profession, therefore, substituted for pri-

\* "The religious principles of Roman Catholics being unchangeable, they are applicable to all times."—Vide Dr. Troy's Pastoral Letter, before cited.



mary proof would be as weak as it must be admitted to be presumptuous; for though infallibility ceases, wherever inability to disprove established facts, by which it is impeached, occurs, yet to meet the purposes of "Catholic" necessities, it is but reasonable to suggest that any doctrines not expressly renounced and disclaimed by the most authentic evidence, and under the sanction of the highest authority are, *ipso facto*, held and virtually retained. You will, I doubt not, anticipate that *unerring* standard to which your doctrines and discipline have been adapted THE COUNCIL OF TRENT\*; a council commenced in the year 1545, and concluded in the year 1563, requiring a period of eighteen years to establish the purity of the faith, and to eradicate the errors of heresy by its profound researches and unwearyed "works and labours of love;"—a council that continued during five successive pontificates, viz. of Paul III. Julius III. Marcellus II. Paul IV. and Pius IV. none of whom ever

\* It is a singular fact, that though the doctrines of the Church of Rome were maintained and established in England at the commencement of this celebrated council, no delegates, as representatives of the English church, were sent to Trent, in order to compose, by the aid of their councils, the various differences in doctrine and discipline, then subsisting among the members of this infallible church—a fact so decisive of the state of national opinion, in addition to what was before observed, as to supersede the necessity of a more detailed inquiry.—Vide Bishop Jewell's Letter, subjoined to Brent's History of the Council of Trent, p. 785. Lond. 1678. .

presided there, who, reasoning by analogy, *from* the Divine right of jurisdiction, *assumed* to be held from St. Peter, to the assignment of the same authority to their respective legates, evaded (by proclaiming the plenitude of papal authority, but preventing, by its agents, any inquiry into its origin or extent,) the force of an objection that might be raised against it; viz. that as such council wanted a principal ingredient, “the pope’s presence,” in its commencement, continuance, and conclusion\*: it could not, therefore, be infallible, but even if such a *profane* objection was attempted, it could never be sustained; for most assuredly the Pope then had, or now has, the *same* right to act by delegation to another, as he ever had to *assume* the right of exercising a Divine authority *himself*, founded on the *presumed* delegation of such power by St. Peter, to all his successors: therefore, the infallibility of the council is not inferior to the authority on which it is founded. You are, therefore, positively required to produce the record of this infallible council, duly authenticated, for the examination of the imperial legislature, to enable them to discover,

\* The absence of the Pope from the Council is thus explained: “But, as I conceive Pius IV. the present Pope, remembereth what happened heretofore to John XXII. that he came not in a very happy hour to the Council of Constance; for he came a Pope and returned a Cardinal,—Bishop Jewell’s Letter, subjoined to Brént’s Coun. Trent. p. 787.

by *actual inspection*, whether those doctrines, injurious to the peace and security of man, which were either *generally or partially held*, maintained, practised, or imputed, at any period, have been formally *recited, condemned, repealed, and renounced*, in order to remove doubts and to ensure confidence.

If you will not adopt the plain and obvious course already mentioned, this measure will be indispensable; sound must give way to sense, and *profession to performance*.

As no general council has been held by the Church of Rome, subsequent to the Council of Trent, the unity of the faith must have been then completely settled; otherwise the necessity of another council would be clear and obvious: therefore it must be presumed, that the production of this instrument must be anticipated by the Catholic Bishops and Clergy of Ireland, with superior gratification, as by it the wisdom and piety of that profound and holy council will be disclosed to an astonished world!

Such are your bounden duties; and such, I trust, will be considered as your highest privileges.

• In briefly addressing the superior classes of the Catholics of Ireland, my hopes increase by progression. The weight of prejudice, and the force of precedent, against which I have hitherto contended, ought to be, and I trust has been, much

diminished by the cultivation and exercise of your faculties, on those subjects connected with the happiness of man, and the security of nations. That there must be some prejudices discoverable, similar in character though varying considerably in degree, is, I apprehend, clear and certain. Man is either elevated or depressed, degraded or enlightened, inversely as the mind is qualified to explore truth and to detect error, and as the conscience is warned and excited to attain its object by legitimate and appropriate means.

In the catalogue of various passions by which man is actuated, fear, perhaps, is most predominant, salutary, or destructive according to the object by which it is excited. To fear man, is to degrade and to abuse our nature. To fear God, is to improve and to exalt it. In the one case, reason is subjugated;—in the other, it is exercised by man (to whom it was given for great and peculiar purposes), in the contemplation and service of *Him* who gave it; to distinguish man from inferior animals, over whom his dominion extended; to enable him to act from *motive*, and to be restrained from conviction; to direct and regulate his passions, not to paralyze or destroy them. *This* is the talent with which he was entrusted; and for its disuse or exercise he must be accountable.

The subject - matter of the present address is submitted to your dispassionate consideration, as

you have "the truth" to maintain, and a country to defend, in *common* with subjects of every denomination.

Ye are not required to repeat creeds, or to rehearse catechisms; but ye are called upon to look with compassion on your native land, to behold the majority of its population labouring under slavish fears, and stimulated by fallacious hopes. Ye are impressively conjured to review the multiplied violations of civil order, which, for many years, have disgraced Ireland, and converted her rich and luxuriant plains into hostile camps. And when ye reflect, that punishments have increased as penalties were enacted, it is incumbent to inquire into their real cause, and to prevent, by united exertion, their inevitable consequences.

The rank and character which ye respectively hold in society, qualifies you to appreciate the real value of those sentiments which have been addressed to the Catholics of Ireland in general, and to your priesthood in particular.

Ye are not called upon to assent to what reason can disapprove, or your unbiassed judgment can condemn or reprobate. Ye are not required to expound questions of "scholastic divinity," nor to compare the relative merits of human fabrications, imposed and practised under colour of Divine institutions, during successive ages; but you are called upon to inquire, whether any system of human legislation could possibly supply *that*

*moral void* under which the majority of the Irish population has for centuries laboured, and by which they have been alternately the slaves of passion and the instruments of design.

The objects you are required to obtain (I must again repeat it) are no less than the happiness of man, and the security of nations !

Whether ye appeal to history for experience, or to your own hearts for conviction, ye must equally confess that human institutions—the productions of frail and imperfect man can never be the *cause*, though they may be converted into the *means*, by which such blessings should be secured and effected.

The true principle of self-government must be first understood, and the basis on which it rests admitted and established, before legislation can evince wisdom, or obedience duty.

Each must advert to the records of truth to discover *that supreme allegiance* which its Divine Author *exclusively* claims, and also to learn the true principles of moral obligation—the nature and character of civil obedience—and the *cause* of that benevolence the practice of which it enjoins on all.

If ye really anticipate union from *concession*, your anatomy of the human heart is more *curious than satisfactory* ; for in the past and present situation of our miserable country, ye may

as well expect to gather “grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles.”

Examine the principles I have endeavoured to establish by the facts which history attests, and then deny if ye can that motives do not exist sufficient to *compel* your co-operation in the recovery (from your “venerable hierarchy”) of that Charter of truth and liberty, which is *alone* calculated to procure happiness and to obtain security.

I will not require your opinions on the question of “the infallibility of the Church.” That doctrine, if merely speculative, though impious, would (politically) be an inoffensive delusion; but its consequences become tremendous when the mind can be subjugated to its belief and appalled by its authority. But I would only require ye to prove its truth by the following test; viz. how can the belief of this doctrine contribute to promote the glory of God and the happiness of man? And if your minds were ever exercised on the nature of such a claim, or the Scriptures, from whence it ought to be derived, and by which, if *divine*, it *must* be *expressly* recognized, have ever been consulted; and if, in the course of such inquiry, your reason has been freely exercised to discover the basis of such a pretension; then I should only say, *Believe it if you can*, for the exercise of so much faith *against* reason would, if

aided *by it*, enable you to surmount all difficulties, and raise you (if possible) above the chances of mortality.

But whatever your opinions might still continue to be on the subject of the “infallibility of the church,” I am inclined to think ye will not become the advocates of its “impeccability.” Here, indeed, positive evidence must at once destroy every favourable presumption which ye might have previously entertained.

This *infallible* church is *expressly* charged with retaining from the majority of the people the possession and use of the holy Scriptures, and of distributing them only to a chosen few, polluted and defiled, and even then not as a *right* but merely as a *favour*; for the same power that can *absolutely* withhold, may *partially privilege* and *arbitrarily* reassume.

It is impossible on such a subject as the present to avoid repetition. The importance of the offence charged and substantiated affords an ample excuse; as the reason assigned for such detention is the incalculable injury which an indiscriminate use of the Scriptures amongst the ignorant and illiterate must inevitably produce, of which “the Church” is alone competent to determine; though the use of the Scriptures is freely extended to *all*, and imperiously directed (for “to the poor the Gospel was preached”) by



that great Authority who is alone infallible and Divine.

However improved your sentiments and opinions may possibly be, ye belong to a society not *simply* ignorant, but *systematically* perverted: the necessity, therefore, of rescuing them from moral bondage becomes essential to those who are the immediate candidates for power and privilege. But the impelling motive for your individual exertions and joint co-operation in the recovery of the Charter of your Christian liberty is this—the happiness that must *then* be enjoyed, and the security that would then be obtained.

That religion might procure for man certain and essential benefits, it must be *pure* and *undefiled*, as delivered by its great Author; otherwise the evils that pervade society from its *spurious* imitation become desolating and calamitous.

The justice of this observation has been so *practically* verified as to supercede the necessity of protracted discussion.

Ye are addressed as men who are capable of raising your minds above narrow prejudices and vulgar errors; and as much has been said on the subject of “liberality,” prove its existence by your actions.

The truth of the premises, viz. that true religion is essential to man, is admitted: let us not differ then in the mode of drawing the conclusion.

“Search the Scriptures” as they are, without note or comment. Read them, if possible, divested of previous opinions; and I will trust to your candour to confess that the treasure of which the majority of your countrymen is so cruelly deprived, is the only basis upon which a wise and permanent policy can be erected, and that the necessity which is imposed on you, as men and Christians, of distributing the Scriptures amongst your *enslaved* countrymen, and consequently of disclaiming the Papal authority, is controuling and imperative. True it is, that in satisfying your consciences, by exercising your reason, obstacles will increase, and the “enemies to the truth” oppose and malign you: but fear not: remember the words of the Apostle Peter, when, under trying circumstances, he said, “We must obey God rather than men;” and in his service you will be enabled to convert the wiles of Satan into the means by which your patriotic labours will be crowned with success.

From you, particularly, much may reasonably be expected: sound deliberation, united with prompt and energetic action; the fear of man to subside, and in its place the fear of God to be substituted.

The end to be obtained is national happiness united with national security—the means are an exemption from slavish fears and temporizing

expedients, and the prosecution of one common cause by one great and national exertion.

Doubtless, in the pursuit of this high and truly *important duty*, ye may be branded as apostates or relapsed heretics: ye may be warned of the heinous sin of judging for yourselves, or of daring to exercise your reason without the previous authority of "the Church:" ye may also be told, that the advice ye received was only a snare laid to endanger your religion, and to disgrace your pastors:—all this and more will be boldly urged, and dexterously insinuated: but to men who are the professed advocates of constitutional liberty, I will not impute either vacillating fears or mean acquiescences; for otherwise ye would exhibit a strange and anomalous appearance—ye would profess liberty with your lips, but submit to an ignominious slavery by your actions—ye would become the registers of your own disqualifications by surrendering the cause of real liberty. "Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage\*."

Ye are not required to commence hostile operations against your "venerable hierarchy." If warned by the voice of Conscience, they should issue the expected proclamation; as then ye would co-operate with those deserving of your confi-

\* Gal. v. 1.

dence, and by your joint exertions *might* and *would*, in one hour, render more essential service to the vital interests of your country, than all the labours of Popes or Councils have ever achieved, from Pope Boniface the Third of *pious* memory, to the happy æra of this *enlightened* pontificate.

If, however, the still voice of conscience will not be heard ; if the expected proclamation will not be issued by the party upon which such an imperious duty *primarily* devolves ; then indeed this objection will come too late—viz. that the delivery and interpretation of the Scriptures belongs only to “the Church.” For ye may with truth reply, “If such was your positive duty, why has it not been performed? Why has not the bread of life been bountifully distributed to a sickly and pining population? Produce your *scriptural* authority for such detention ; and if you assume the right of interpretation, also inform us where or to whom we are to resort for the explanation of any interpretation of “the Church ” which, on due inquiry, may contradict our reason ; and also produce the scriptural authority which compels us to submit to what our reason may *eventually* condemn.”

Inform your “venerable hierarchy,” that ye are required, in the presence of your *enslaved* country, to give the best and most decided proof of your qualification for power and privilege, by

rescuing the Charter of your country's freedom from those "who have taken away the key of knowledge, and will neither go in themselves nor suffer them, that are entering to go in\*." Assure them that you will not desist until your hopes are realized;—that legislative concession *now* would confirm *error*, but that acquaintance with the truth would *dissipate* and *dispel* it; — that by *it alone* the true principles of morality and obedience can be inculcated;—that, as possession of this Charter would be a national benefit, so its recovery must assume the character of national exertion;—and, that ye do not require to be more catholic than the "church" was during the first five centuries of the Christian æra. And ye may, on the authority of unimpeached history, assure them, that for a more extended period the title of Universal Bishop was utterly unknown; that when first assumed, the impostor was supposed to betray the spirit of Anti-Christ; and that ye will not from henceforth submit to the exercise of *any* foreign spiritual jurisdiction over the free-born subjects of your native land. Assure them that ye do not intend to interfere with their spiritual jurisdiction *within* the realm, nor with the tenets in which ye have been so zealously instructed; that ye will *only* bring such tenets to the *ordeal* of the Scriptures, of which ye presume

\* Matt. xxiii. 13.

they could not disapprove, as your “venerable hierarchy” admit such Scriptures to be *authentic* and *divine*; and that, according to the *conformity* or *non-conformity* of such tenets to this standard, they will either be retained or rejected;—that ye will not consider such conduct as an interference with the doctrine or discipline of any sect or party, but as an act of imperative justice, by which a common but invaluable property, on which reason ought to be exercised, will be restored to *all, without dictation or controul*; and by the use of which, the mind would soar, “on eagles’ wings,” above the narrow limits of human artifice;—and that ye are convinced such a resolution, vigorously enforced and completed, is not only truly *Catholic*, but the only effectual remedy to eradicate all “heretical pravity” from the “Island of Saints.”

Ye will thus perform the duties of good *Catholics* and real patriots. Ye will have your consciences to console you, and the anticipated gratitude of unborn millions to cheer and consecrate your patriot labours. Ye will rank high upon the list of fame, and will then have justly earned the appropriate appellation of “defenders of your country’s rights.”

But if such exertions should not be made, either in conjunction with your clergy, or, on the principles of genuine catholicity, by yourselves, though unaided or opposed; then I would be glad

to know what solution ye would give to the following postulate: "The ratios of the political liberty and mental slavery of a nation being given, it is required to know, what proportion of political power a society so constituted is entitled to claim or qualified to enjoy."

And now permit me to request ye will consider the value of the prize for which ye are to contend, and the honourable means by which ye are encouraged to obtain it.

Recollect, that though ye may deserve some credit for ingenuity, by embellishing the science of demonstration with an hypothetical solution of the above postulate, as applicable to our abused country, yet do not forget that "Nero fiddled whilst Rome was burning."

Seriously reflect, that your decision will determine *whether truth shall be preferred to falsehood, or genuine liberty to the most unqualified slavery*; and, as example is more forcible than precept, be assured also, that every region of the earth, either where the light of the Gospel is obscured and perverted, unperceived and unknown, or manifested and perspicuous, is remotely, if not directly, interested in this important decision. And though ye may not feel the yoke as *practically* as the majority of your oppressed brethren, yet do not forget, that *through policy consulted, or by indulgence wisely conferred, and not by right acknowledged*, ye enjoy a precarious exemption.

Duly consider, that if ye decline to fill the enviable stations to which ye are invited, and (in the wretched phraseology of the present day) *are determined to stand by and support your religion*; then, by *that* religion stand or fall, as contained in *that great body of divinity and standard of Catholic orthodoxy, the Council of Trent.*

Recollect, ye are not persecuted for your opinions. Our orthodoxy is not capable of arriving at such theological perfection. Nor are ye punished for the actions of others, over whom ye could have no possible controul. But ye are disqualified from acquiring power and privilege until those obnoxious doctrines maintained, practised, or imputed to the Church of Rome, are shewn to be *expressly* *re-cited, clearly* repealed, and *unequivocally* renounced, under the authority of the above council, by the production of that instrument to which I before adverted.

Your present disqualification is founded on the immutable principles of equity and justice. For if these objectionable doctrines should not be repealed by that council, which ye consider the unerring standard of orthodoxy; and if such doctrines would be subversive of the security of society, whenever power could effect what policy must previously appear to reprobate; it follows, that continued submission to such an authority is a virtual recognition of these unrepealed doc-



trines;—for the disqualification is *in rem*, and not *in personam*; and, therefore, the principle which I examined in the Second Part of this address, as recognized by the Constitution, remains unimpeached,—viz. an equality of rights with a capability of privileges.

Though this reasoning is, I apprehend, clear and decisive, yet it would excite my unfeigned regret, if, by your *pertinacious* adherence to an assumed authority, ye would come within the operation of those salutary restrictions (equally operative on all), the penalties of which need not be incurred if ye are resolved to act on the broad principles of Catholicity, by conforming to what reason warrants, the Constitution prescribes, and the *true Catholic Religion of Christ* neither in its letter nor spirit condemns.

Therefore, let me again entreat you, as I am more anxious for your welfare than apprehensive of your censure, that ye will not desert the true interests of your oppressed and insulted country; but that you will seriously weigh and consider how much ye are become the arbiters of her destiny: for if ye decide as reason dictates, and your true interests require, ye will, under the controuling influence of a wise and mysterious Providence, exhibit a more imposing spectacle of moral grandeur, than even the present age, so fertile of great events, has as yet displayed.

Ye will represent the intellectual energies of Ireland, so long torpid and oppressed, at length roused from a mortal slumber; and ye will proclaim the defeat of spiritual tyranny by the force of reason. Ye will then exhibit man in fair and due proportions; his mind elevated and expanded; his passions regulated and restrained: being a "witness to the truth," he will then look up to Heaven with pious gratitude, and on man with universal benevolence.

Thoughts rush into my mind as I advance; but more need not be said, to call into action all the faculties of man, and to devote them to the wants of an afflicted country.

In the course of this address, I have laboured in sincerity, if not with success, to promote the true interests of Ireland; and though Catholics (so called) may boast of many friends, who would rather purchase popularity than incur displeasure, yet true friendship would sooner forego the one, and risk the other, than lose the opportunity of discovering their disease, and pointing out their remedy.

I have stated the security which they now enjoy, in the possession of "original rights," by which the invaluable blessings of life, liberty, and property are irrevocably established.

I have endeavoured, I trust successfully, to prove by historic reference, that equality of rights with a capability of privileges is a re-

cognized principle of the Constitution, possessing recuperative energies illustrative of such a principle, which, though often suspended, were never obliterated or destroyed.

I have also endeavoured to prove, that the qualification prescribed as the precedent condition to be performed, previous to their admission to power and privilege, is neither repugnant to this political principle, nor contrary to the letter or the spirit of the Christian religion: and. I have finally considered the nature and consequences of divided allegiance, together with the tendency and character of those pastoral duties as now performed by the hierarchy of what is called "Catholic Ireland," and endeavoured to establish this important conclusion, that under the influence of such pastoral instruction, arising from submission to the authority of a foreign spiritual jurisdiction, the Catholics of Ireland would be unfit depositaries of power and privileges; and therefore, that they are *virtually*, though not *expressly*, the accessaries of their own degradation.

Having now viewed and considered this subject in its varied shapes and respective bearings, if not with ability equal to its importance, at least with zeal and sincerity; and having addressed two orders of men whose co-operation ought to be secure, "if wisdom crieth not in vain;" permit me to request your Lordship's attention to a few con-

cluding observations. The clear distinction between the rights of conscience and the exercise of legislative authority, you must now, I trust, be enabled fully to appreciate; and though the opinions which have been advanced in support of this essential distinction may, as far as the individual is concerned, be justly disregarded, yet if they are warranted by facts and supported by experience, they become *fixed*, not *volatile*: they are *beacons* to warn, not *meteors* to fascinate or deceive.

I anticipate your Lordship's concurrence with my former definition of legislation, that it is a "choice of evils;" and that in its due application you are to discover "sound policy:" for really, my Lord, if you duly examine those various acts of legislation, from Magna Charta to the Act of Settlement (inclusive), which are justly considered the pledges of our constitutional rights, you will perceive legislation to proceed on a due appreciation *of man as he is, not as he ought to be*—you will perceive that human frailty, as invested with authority, is anticipated by the provisions made to counteract it; that all the negative or prohibitory clauses contained in these charters are so many restraints on vice, to produce virtue, and on licentiousness, to secure and perpetuate liberty; and that, whenever any of their respective provisions are so neutralized as to become the auxiliaries of vice, catering to the propensi-

ties of a corrupt nature by vainly presuming that man is *what he ought to be*, then the blessings of an abstract and visionary policy (not to use any harsher terms) become *too fatally* evident. The value of experience is, then, admitted, even by those whose "liberality" on other occasions has frequently disregarded that warning voice.

The provisions contained in the Act of Settlement, and the manner in which they are evaded, is illustrative of these observations. By the seventh clause in the Act of Settlement, passed in the 12th and 13th year of William the Third, entitled An Act for the Limitation of the Crown, and better securing the Rights and Liberties of the Subject, it is expressly enacted, "That no person who has an office or place of profit under the Crown, or who receives a pension from the Crown, shall be capable of serving as a Member of the House of Commons."

Here, then, legislation proceeded on a full assurance and knowledge of the human character, of what man really is, and therefore wisely guarded against the union of power and emolument in the person of the representative; for, as I before remarked, the retention of power operates more strongly on the mind than the pursuit of it; and therefore in the same degree disqualifies its possessor from the dispassionate exercise of that constitutional independence which ought to be an indispensable qualification for those who

are called to the high and paramount duties of legislation.

Let it not be vainly imagined that any human institution can be formed exempt from the principles of natural and acquired corruption; but the spirit of the Act virtually declares, that the disease should not be fed and pampered, but mitigated and subdued, though it cannot be finally eradicated. How then is the *spirit* of the Act destroyed, whilst its *letter* is punctiliously complied with? I answer, The representative of the people, on receiving the reward of his *patriotic labours*, vacates his seat, as *incapable* by the *letter* of the Act to *retain* it, but, in defiance of its *spirit*, he is *capable* of being *re-elected*! What constrained homage is here paid to virtue, even by the continuance of that Act, the salutary effects of which are thus *so constitutionally* evaded!—an Act intended by our patriot ancestors to be *practical* and *beneficial*, by separating legislative duty from ministerial office; an Act justly considered as one of our constitutional charters—its policy, therefore, need not now be discussed and ought not to be perverted, as it displays on its front evidence of matured consideration; otherwise it would be worse than folly to call that a charter, the provisions of which were not as *immutable* and *perpetual* as the rights and privileges it professed to secure ought to be *inviolable* and *inalienable*.

*condition,*  
*that expedients may be, and too often are, resorted*  
to in order to *palliate* what they cannot *remove*;  
and so far as they answer their respective ends,  
by being subordinate to, and not destructive of,  
chartered rights, will perhaps be dignified with  
the name of "policy;" but "no state necessity  
or existing circumstances" can justify such a  
modification of the Act of Settlement as vir-  
tually libels the wisdom of those enlightened  
legislators we have been from infancy instructed  
to venerate and esteem, rendering their patriot  
labours (the effects of which they intended all  
should practically enjoy) only a *specious* and *un-*  
*productive* theory. But it is an awful truth, that  
this Act has been gradually undermined, though  
it perhaps could not be openly assaulted. What  
cannot be acquired by force may effectually be  
attained by influence. Yet it would ill become  
either the ministerial party or the opposition, im-  
properly denominated "the country party"—the  
possessors or expectants of power—to use reci-  
mination. Each is "*particeps criminis*"—pa-  
triot or courtier alternately, as power is pos-  
sessed or hopes frustrated; and if an accuser  
could be found amongst the ranks of the con-  
tending parties, he must *patriotically* anticipate  
the effects of just retaliation. This is not *vulgar*  
censure or *indiscriminate* abuse. If it is not true,  
it must recoil with redoubled force on him who

uses it. Man is too often liberal in sentiment though contracted in action. Truth, whether political or religious, must ever be offensive, *because it allays human vanity, and administers no aliment to human corruption.*

The negative clauses in all the charters of our liberties, from Magna Charta to the Bill of Rights inclusive, were applicable to the objects over whom power was to be exercised: but the Act of Settlement applies also to the depositaries of it: hence the subsequent necessity of evading those disqualifications which the wise policy of our ancestors considered as essential to the freedom of legislative inquiry, and to the security of the subject against the consequences of indefinite taxation, which the union of legislative with ministerial power must ever be enabled to produce; as the ratio of taxation, payable by the individual, either as the depositary of power or as the trustee of popular confidence, bears no proportion to what he enjoys of emolument and influence in *possession*, or appreciates in *expectancy*.

True it is, that corruption might be rendered destructive to itself by its votaries requiring payment *previous* to performance. But such is the composition of imperfect man, that his belief is ever commensurate with his wishes; and thus a never-failing credit is established from the inexhaustible source of human degeneracy: "it palters with him in a double sense: it holds the



word of promise to the ear, but breaks it to the hope." This language cannot be mistaken, though the present "enlightened age" may boast of political as well as of religious casuists, as it is intended to awaken conscience and to convert *nominal* into *real* patriotism. With truth I can assert, that I am not anxious to *innovate*, but to *restore*. A practical, not a visionary, reform may in a great degree be effected by the restoration of this wise and salutary charter to its original and intended operation, by attaching an actual incapacity of re-election upon any Member of the House of Commons who comes within the scope and meaning of the seventh clause of this Act, as before stated: thus steadily adhering to the wisdom of our ancestors, who, convinced of our vices, but more than doubtful of our virtues, combated, but did not stimulate, the propensities of an imperfect and corrupted nature.

The violation of human laws justly provokes a correspondent punishment, and calls forth the moral superintendence of an enlightened government; but neutralizing their benefits may, perhaps, as the "*arcana imperii*," be *just*, *necessary*, and *expedient*. However, the moral code from which such policy can be extracted, I confess my inability to discover; but if "liberality" is to be dignified with the title of legislative wisdom, by conferring political power without catholic

qualification, calculate then, if you can, the blessings of that happy union, when error will be engrafted on corruption. Is not this the appropriate season to dispel the one and to eradicate the other?

It has been formerly said by a great statesman\*, that England can be ruined only by her Parliaments; and by a celebrated foreign writer †, that the liberties of England will then be destroyed when the legislative becomes more corrupt than the executive power; yet, with great deference to such high authorities, I am satisfied, that, though the conclusions would be just if the premises were fully admitted, such positions are only tenable on a supposition that the principle of counteraction did not exist—that disease had pervaded the *whole* mass—and that the power of resistance to arrest its progress had at length finally ceased! But experience has proved, and I am satisfied ever will prove, that a portion of vitality still exists, and that the House of Commons contains within itself the seeds of its own regeneration; which, under the fostering hand of patriotism, awakened to a just sense of its real danger, will again revive, with unimpaired and unabated vigour, and expel that consuming disease under which the Constitution has so long and patiently laboured. *This is self-defence, not vague or empty declamation.*

\* Lord Burleigh.

† Montesquieu.

You are not unconscious of the high tone in which "liberty" resounded through the various speeches and resolutions of those *enlightened Catholic legislators*, which have been made at their council-board, and successively published for the *moral and political* improvement of Ireland, wherein their anxiety "to cleanse the Augean stable" is peculiarly discernible; and though they felt an honourable ambition to aid and support the national councils by their legislative talents and exertions, *yet they hailed the auspicious hour, when corruption would cease, and the rights of a free people be vindicated by the effect of equal representation.*

I must, therefore, necessarily presume, that (even if no precedent condition were imposed previous to their admission to power and privilege) they would not so far violate their patriotic professions, as to accept of honours and distinctions, by becoming Members of a Parliament so constituted, either as *purchasers*, by *patronage*, or by what is figuratively stated "*free election*," through the use of means which would but ill accord with their exalted notions of constitutional purity. They anticipate the period *when the rights of a "free people" will be vindicated by the effect of equal representation.* I also look forward, with fond anxiety and increasing hopes, to "*that auspicious hour*," when the majority of Ireland will, in reality, become what they now *vainly* pretend to

be, "freemen." These *enlightened* legislators only assume the existence of this freedom. I have *not only* denied, but *actually* disproved it. However, during the continuance of that legislative corruption which they so pathetically deplore, let their patriot labours be directed to the recovery of that great charter of their emancipation, "the Scriptures," by a due examination of which they will discover how they are to *become freemen*, and to escape from that *mental bondage* which spiritual tyranny has for centuries imposed upon them; and they will then be better qualified to combat corruption, by the unerring means which may be employed for the attainment of *real* liberty; and thus produce, by the impressive force of reason and example, *that conviction of their sincerity* in the cause of freedom which popular and eloquent appeals are not so well calculated to demonstrate.

Human legislation not founded on experience, would be as criminal as it is vain and inefficient. Concession and restraint have alternately succeeded each other, without producing their intended benefits. Temporizing policy has raised hopes and diminished confidence. The "Catholic" question has been fought, rather than discussed. The true friends of "Catholic" liberty have been intitled "bigots," whilst the Administration of the country, on which I am not called upon to pro-

nounce an eulogium, has been considered as unjust. The former epithet, it must be confessed, was *happily* and *judiciously* selected: the latter is of approved signification whenever legislation opposes passion and acts from the conviction of matured reflection. To separate error from the most approved specimens of human counsel, would be as impossible to achieve as it must be frantic to imagine; but it is a criminal abuse of reason to expect that legislation could be successful in procuring the happiness and security of any nation, as illustrated in the case of degraded Ireland, where the majority of its inhabitants are deprived and ignorant of those elementary principles of *real* liberty, upon a knowledge of which all legislation must be founded, and who chimerically expect from human authority that power and those privileges for the enjoyment of which they must be duly qualified by their own previous exertions.

I expect your Lordship's assistance and patronage, in recommending and enforcing the application of the truths herein contained, only as far as reason approves, Christianity does not condemn, and an enlarged and enlightened policy confirms them. The objects to be obtained are worthy of all the energies of a rational and intellectual nature—the means recommended, it is humbly hoped, are neither partial nor ephemeral, but

practical and decisive: they must enforce conviction; and, I trust, may speedily ensure permanent and complete success. I will leave the event to Him in whose hands are the issues of life and death, for great is the truth, and it must prevail!

LIBERATOR.

## ERRATA.

- Page 40, line 19; *for* "legal," *read* "royal."
- 43, — 1; *for* "of," *read* "at."
- 50, — 13; *for* "thought," *read* "though."
- 60, — 6 from bottom; *insert the word* "original"  
*before* "oath."
- 108, line 23; *for* "nominated," *read* "nominates."
- 128, — 2; *for* "inquiry," *read* "injury."

## APPENDIX.

THE following documents are submitted to public investigation without criticism or remark, with the exception of Nos. I and VII. In the former of which, the sentiments of an individual are expressed on the interesting subject of moral obligation. If such sentiments were *privately* disclosed and *confidentially* communicated, no human consideration should induce their publication; but they were previously detailed in a public newspaper, as a vindication of public conduct from an alleged charge to vilify and asperse it. The broad distinction between the character of the *man*, and the doctrines attached to the *profession* of which he was an episcopal member, cannot be confounded. His memory may, and I doubt not will, be adverted to (as a private character) with respect and esteem, whilst the doctrines of “the Church” (whatever the state of his mind then might possibly be) will continue, *until changed*, to be *practically* felt and sincerely lamented.



No. I.—(*see p. 95.*)

“AN Advertisement appeared in the *Leinster Journal* of last Saturday, signed George Bryan, in which I am charged with the breach of a solemn promise. A public attack of this kind necessarily calls on any man to justify his conduct, if in his power. A plain narrative of the facts, as they happened, and an explanation of the motives on which I acted, will complete this justification, I hope, in the eyes of any impartial man.

“1st. I acknowledge that I promised, to some gentlemen of the Committee, that I would sign these addresses, when some lines, to which I objected, would be expunged—but I utterly deny having made any solemn promise, if by a solemn promise Mr. Bryan means any thing more than a ‘serious promise;’ for nothing, in actions, expressions, or writing, was superadded to the verbal declaration I made of signing the addresses when corrected. The nature of the case did not at all require a solemn promise; and the gentlemen who presented these addresses to me had too much sagacity and judgment to alarm my suspicions by such a proposal; for the consequence would probably be, a rejection of the addresses on the spot.

“2dly. Some days elapsed before the corrected addresses were again brought to me to be signed. In this interval many of the Clergy and Laity of this city came to me, and remonstrated against my signing these addresses. They urged, that these addresses were calculated to pass an indirect censure on the proceedings of the Prelates in Dublin, and to diminish the respect due to their late Resolutions; that they were preparatory steps to the concession of a Veto to the Government, in the nomination of the Catholic Prelates of Ireland; and that a general dislike and disapprobation of these addresses prevailed among the great majority of the Priests and Catholic Laity of the city. When I ascertained this last fact, I resolved not to sign

the addresses, and was at the same time persuaded that I was guilty of no sin or crime by such a refusal.

“I am convinced that a serious, sincere, and voluntary promise binds a man, who makes it, under the pain of sin, to fulfil it. But, I am likewise convinced, that the obligation arising from a promise ceases in the following cases:—

“1st. If a man promises a thing impossible. For no one can be bound to do a thing impossible to be done.

“2dly. If a man promises to do any thing sinful or unlawful. For no promise, though confirmed with an oath, can bind a man to commit sin.

“3dly. When a person, in whose favour a promise is made, releases the promiser from the promise he has made.

“4thly. When a man promises a thing pernicious or useless to the person in whose favour the promise is made.

“5thly. When, before the promise is fulfilled, the circumstances become so changed, that the person promising, had he foreseen these circumstances, would never have made the promise.

“On this case I rest my justification. For had I foreseen or known that my signing these addresses would produce such alarm and consternation, such dislike and disapprobation, as I afterwards found they would, in the minds of the great majority of the Catholic Priests and Laity of this city, I would by no means have consented to sign them.—St. Thomas says, ‘That a man is not guilty of an untruth in such a case; because, when he promised, he intended to perform his promise: nor is he unfaithful to his promise, because the circumstances are changed afterwards.’ This is not only the opinion of St. Thomas, but is also the opinion of all the theologians and canonists I ever saw or read.

“JAMES LANIGAN.”

“Kilkenny, Nov. 8, 1808.”

## No. II.—(see p. 95.)

*Declaration of the Roman Catholic Primate of all  
Ireland.*

“I THINK, and am certain, that in forming their Resolutions the Prelates did not mean to decide that the admission of a Veto, or negative, on the part of the Crown, with the consent of the Holy See, in the election of Roman Catholic Bishops, **WOULD BE CONTRARY TO THE DOCTRINE OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH,** OR TO ANY PRACTICE OR USAGE ESSENTIALLY OR INDISPENSABLY connected with the Roman Catholic Religion. Candour, however, and truth oblige me to say, that the declaration made by the Bishops on the above-mentioned occasion was dictated by what they and I conceived to be a well-founded apprehension that the concession in question might eventually be attended with consequences dangerous to the Roman Catholic Religion. Such danger, in my mind, and in the opinion of several other prelates, is of a **TEMPORARY NATURE,** resulting from **EXISTING CIRCUMSTANCES,** though many persons suppose it to arise from the nature of the measure, **THUS GIVING TO THE RESOLUTION OF THE BISHOPS A MEANING IT DOES NOT BEAR.**”

## No. III.—(see p. 95.)

*“At a numerous Meeting of the Roman Catholic Committee of the County and City of Kilkenny, on Monday, November 7, 1808;*

*“Major BRYAN in the Chair;*

*“IT was proposed, and unanimously agreed to, that the Declaration of the Most Reverend the Roman Catholic*

Primate of all Ireland\* be now read; and being read accordingly, it was resolved, that this Declaration, together with the unanimous Resolutions annexed, should be inserted in the public papers.

“Resolved—That the thanks of this Committee are justly due, and are hereby most respectfully given, to the most Rev. Doctor O'Reilly, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Armagh, for his luminous, candid, and satisfactory explanation, on an important question recently submitted to him by the Roman Catholic Noblemen and Gentlemen of the County Louth, and which question we regret to find so much misunderstood, and so industriously misrepresented. Well aware that the vesting in the Crown a certain Veto, or Negative, on the nomination of Irish Roman Catholic Bishops, with the consent of the Holy See, did not militate against our faith, nor even against the discipline of our church, we rejoice to see our opinion confirmed by the highest Roman Catholic episcopal authority in Ireland.

“Resolved—That we deprecate, in a point purely ecclesiastical, all interference on the part of the Roman Catholic Laity, tending, by intimidation, to prevent our Prelates from hereafter coinciding in such arrangements as may satisfy his Majesty's Government, ensure success to the Catholic claims, and be at the same time perfectly compatible with the interest and safety of our religion.

(Signed) “GEORGE BRYAN, Chairman.”

#### No. IV.—(see p. 129.)

##### *Bull of Pope Adrian, dated 1165.*

“ADRIAN, Bishop, servant of the servants of God, to his dearest son in Christ, the illustrious King of England, greeting, and apostolic benediction.

\* Vide supra, No II.

“ Full laudably and profitably hath your magnificence conceived the design of propagating your glorious renown on earth, and completing your reward of eternal happiness in heaven; while, as a Catholic prince, you are intent on enlarging the borders of the church, teaching the truth of the Christian faith to the ignorant and rude, exterminating the roots of vice from the field of the Lord, and for the more convenient execution of this purpose requiring the counsel and favour of the Apostolic See. In which, the maturer your deliberation, and the greater the discretion of your procedure, by so much the happier, we trust, will be your progress, with the assistance of the Lord; as all things are used to come to a prosperous end and issue, which take their beginning from the ardour of faith and the love of religion.

“ There is indeed no doubt but that Ireland, and all the islands on which Christ the Sun of Righteousness hath shone, and which have received the doctrines of the Christian faith, do belong to the jurisdiction of St. Peter and of the holy Roman Church, as your Excellency also doth acknowledge. And therefore we are the more solicitous to propagate the righteous plantation of faith in this land, and the branch acceptable to God, as we have the secret conviction of conscience that this is more especially our bounden duty.

“ You then, most dear son in Christ, have signified to us your desire to enter into the island of Ireland, in order to reduce the people to obedience unto laws, and to extirpate the plants of vice; and that you are willing to pay from each house a yearly pension of one penny to St. Peter, and that you will preserve the rights of the churches of this land whole and inviolate. We therefore, with that grace and acceptance suited to your pious and laudable design, and favourably assenting to your petition, do hold it good and acceptable, that, for extending the borders of the church, restraining the progress of vice, for the correction of manners, the planting of virtue, and the

increase of religion, you enter this island, and execute therein whatever shall pertain to the honour of God and welfare of the land; and that the people of this land receive you honourably, and reverence you as their lord: the rights of their churches still remaining sacred and inviolate; and saving to St. Peter the annual pension of one penny from every house.

“ If then you be resolved to carry the design you have conceived into effectual execution, study to form this nation to virtuous manners; and labour by yourself, and others whom you shall judge meet for this work, in faith, word, and life, that the church may be there adorned; that the religion of the Christian faith may be planted and grow up; and that all things pertaining to the honour of God, and the salvation of souls, be so ordered, that you may be entitled to the fulness of eternal reward from God, and obtain a glorious renown on earth throughout all ages.”

#### No. V.—(see p. 214.)

##### *Decree of Ferdinand VII. re-establishing the Inquisition.*

“ THE glorious title of *Catholic*, which distinguishes us from among all other Christian princes, is owing to the perseverance of the kings of Spain, who would never tolerate in their states any other religion than the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman. This title imposes upon me the duty to render myself worthy of it by all the means which Heaven has placed within my power. The late troubles, and the war which has desolated, during six years, every province in the kingdom; the long abode which has been made in Spain, by troops of different sects, almost all of whom were infected with sentiments of hatred towards our religion; the disorder which has been the infallible result of this, and the inattention with which the affairs of our holy religion have been treated during this unfortunate

period: all these circumstances united, have laid the field open to wicked persons, who have never experienced any check: dangerous opinions have been introduced, and have taken root in our states, by the same means as they are spread in other countries.

“Wishing, then, to remedy so grievous an evil, and to preserve among my subjects the holy religion of Jesus Christ, which they have always revered, and in which they have lived, and always wish to live, either on account of the personal obligation of having no other imposed on the princes who reign over them by the fundamental laws, which I have promised and sworn to observe, or because this religion is the most certain means of sparing my people from intestine dissensions, and insuring to them that tranquillity of which they stand in need, I have judged it necessary, under the present circumstances, that the Tribunal of the Holy Office should resume its jurisdiction.

“Upon this subject, learned and virtuous prelates, many respectable corporations, and grave personages ecclesiastics and seculars, have represented to me, that Spain is indebted to this tribunal for the good fortune of not having fallen, in the 16th century, into errors which have caused so many misfortunes among other nations; and that, on the contrary, at that period, the sciences were here cultivated with distinction, and Spain produced a multitude of great men, distinguished by their knowledge and their piety. It has further been represented to me, that the Oppressor of Europe has not neglected to employ, as an efficacious method of introducing the corruption and discord which supported so well his projects, the suppression of this tribunal, under the vain pretext that it could exist no longer, in consequence of the enlightened state of the present age; and that the pretended Cortes, general and extraordinary, under the same pretext, and under the favour of the constitution which they tumultuously decreed, abolished also the holy office, to the regret of the whole nation.

“For these causes I have been earnestly supplicated to re-establish it in the exercise of its functions; and yielding to considerations so just, and to the wish manifested by my people, whose zeal for the religion of our ancestors has anticipated my orders, by hastening to recal spontaneously the subaltern inquisitors of some provinces—

“I have, therefore, resolved, that for the moment the supreme council of the Inquisition, and the other tribunals of the holy office, shall resume their authorities, conformable to the concessions which have been made to them by the sovereign pontiffs, at the instance of my august predecessors, and by the prelates of the diocese, and by the kings who have assured to them the full exercise thereof; observing in this double jurisdiction, ecclesiastical and civil, the ordonnances which were in force in 1808, and the laws which have, on different occasions, been made for obviating certain abuses. But as, independent of these ancient laws, it may be proper to add new ones on this subject, and my intention being to perfect that establishment in such manner as to render it eminently useful to my subjects, it is my desire that, as soon as the said supreme council of the Inquisition shall be assembled, two of the members who compose it, joined to two of the members of the council of Castile, both appointed by me, shall examine the forms and mode of proceeding of the holy office, in its processes, and with respect to the censure and prohibition of books; and if they find that the interests of my subjects, or the claims of sound justice, require any reform or change, they will make a report to me, supported by their observations, in order that I may take the necessary resolutions.

“I, THE KING.”

“Madrid, July 21, 1814.



## No. VI.—(see p. 214.)

*“Edict of the most excellent Lord Inquisitor-General, transmitted to the respective Districts of all the Spanish Dominions in Europe and America.*

“WE, D. Francisco Xavier Mier y Campillo, by the grace of God and of the holy apostolic see Bishop of Almeria, knight of the great cross of the royal and distinguished Spanish order of Charles III. member of his Majesty’s council, and Inquisitor-General of his kingdoms and lordships,

“To all the faithful inhabitants of these kingdoms, health in our Lord Jesus. We are all astonished at and deplore with the greatest reason, the horrid ravages caused on our soil by the barbarity and fierceness of our enemies, which will be transmitted to distant generations in the multitude of ruins, which strike the eye, from one extreme of the kingdom to the other; but however great these evils may be, as well as the desolation to which whole towns have been reduced, together with numberless families of all conditions and classes, we have still to deplore another evil incomparably greater, with which Divine Providence has punished our sins; for though poverty, misery, widowhood, orphanage, as well as other kinds of unhappiness, justly excite pain and regret, they cannot in any way be compared with that we ought to feel at the loss of our holy faith, and of the ineffable consolations with which, in midst of the greatest afflictions and calamities, the religion of Jesus Christ upholds and comforts us. We will not say that this has abandoned the sad and afflicted Spain, nor that its holy law and the observance of its precepts have disappeared from among us;—thanks to the infinite mercies of the Lord, who has punished us as a father, he always preserved in his inheritance zealous workmen and

faithful servants, who watched and laboured for the glory of his holy name and for the honour of his true spouse, the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman Church;—but we all behold with horror the rapid progress of incredulity and the dreadful corruption of manners which have contaminated the Spanish soil, and of which the piety and religious zeal of our forefathers would be ashamed; seeing that the same errors and new and dangerous doctrines which have miserably destroyed the greatest part of Europe, infest their beloved country, and that the youth drink, like water, this pestiferous venom, for the very reason that it flatters their passions and senses.

“The compassionate heart of our sovereign was moved, at his return from captivity, on beholding this our sad situation, and with a holy zeal he excited that of all ecclesiastical and secular authorities, in order to extirpate so great a scandal; and, in imitation of him, all the good deplore, that many of their children have given ear, as heathen Rome once did, to the errors of all nations.

“Under circumstances, unfortunately too notorious, it is not strange that all the lovers of religion should turn their eyes to the holy tribunal of the faith, and hope, from its zeal for the purity of doctrine and manners, that it will remedy, by the discharge of its sacred ministry, so many evils, through the ways and means granted to it by the apostolic and royal authority with which it is invested. Nothing more urgent to the truth nor more conformable to our institution: for in vain should we be centinels of the house of the Lord, if we were to remain asleep in midst of the common danger to religion and our country. God will not permit us thus basely to abandon his cause, nor to correspond so ill to the exalted piety with which the king, our lord, has re-established us in the weighty functions of our ministry, in which we have sworn to be superior to all human respect, whether it be necessary to watch, persuade, and correct, or whether to separate, cut,

or tear down, the rotten members, in order that they may not infect the sound ones.

“But, in order to proceed in so delicate as well as important and necessary an operation, we will not imitate the ardent zeal of the Apostles when they asked of Jesus Christ to cause fire to rain down from heaven to destroy Samaria, but rather the meekness of their Master and Guide, of which certainly those are ignorant who wish us to commence our functions with fire and sword, by anathematizing and dividing, as the only remedy to save the sacred deposit of the faith, and choak up the bad seed so abundantly scattered on our soil, as well by the immoral band of Jews and sectaries who have profaned it, as the unfortunate liberty of writing, copying, and publishing their errors. Our resolution has been very different, since we have meditated and carefully deliberated the matter with the ministers of the council of H. M. and of the supreme and general Inquisition, all having unanimously agreed, that now, as well as ever, moderation, sweetness, and charity, ought to shine forth as forming the character of the holy office; and that before using the power of the sword granted to us against the contumacious and rebellious, we ought to attract them with sweetness by presenting to them the olive branch, the symbol of our pacific wishes towards those who go so far as to abhor peace. To this we have been moved, not only by the practice of the Church, which has frequently been indulgent and mitigated the rigour of the penalties, when the guilty were numerous, but also by a knowledge of the circumstances under which seduction and deceit have fatally triumphed over the simplicity, and, above all, the confidence by which we were actuated; yet if the hearts of many Spaniards were capable of being surprised in moments of darkness and general overthrow of ideas, they will not have been hardened or rendered insensible to the calls of religion, nor can they have forgotten their former principles.

“Wherefore, far from adopting for the present measures of severity and rigour against the guilty, we have determined to grant them, as we hereby do grant, a term of grace, which shall be from the date of the publication of this our edict, till the last day inclusive of this year, in order that all persons of both sexes, who unfortunately may have fallen into the crime of heresy, or feel themselves guilty of any error against which our mother the church believes and teaches, or of any hidden crime whose cognizance belongs to the holy office, may recur to the latter, and discharge their consciences and abjure their errors, under the security and assurance of the most inviolable secrecy; and on the same being done within the time prefixed, accompanied by a sincere, entire, and true manifestation of all they may know and remember against themselves as well as against others, they shall be charitably received, absolved, and incorporated into the bosom of our holy mother the church, without their thereby having to apprehend the infliction of the punishments ordained, nor the injury of their honour, character, and reputation, and still less the privation of the whole or any part of their property, since for those cases in which they ought to lose it, and the same ought to be applied to the exchequer and treasury of H. M. in conformity to the laws of these kingdoms, H. M. using his natural clemency and preferring the spiritual felicity of his vassals to the interests of his royal exchequer, exempts them for the present from this penalty, and grants them grace and pardon, whereby they may retain and preserve the said property, on condition that they appear within the time prefixed, accompanied with the necessary disposition for a true reconciliation,” &c. &c. &c.

“Madrid, April 5, 1815.”

## No. VII.—(see p. 220.)

*The Oath of a Roman Catholic Bishop at his Consecration.*

“ I —— Bishop of —— do swear, that from this hour forward I shall be faithful and obedient to St. Peter, and to the Holy Church of Rome, *and to my Lord the Pope and his successors canonically entering.* I shall not be of counsel, nor consent that they shall lose either life or member, or shall be taken or suffer any violence or any wrong by any means. Their counsel to me credited by them, their messages, or letters, I shall not willingly discover to any person. The Papacy of Rome, the rules of the holy Fathers, and the *regality* of St. Peter, I shall help, maintain, and defend against all men. The Legate of the See Apostolic, going and coming, I shall honourably entreat. The rights, honours, privileges, and authorities of the Church of Rome, and of the Pope and his successors, I shall cause to be, conserved, defended, *augmented, and promoted.* I shall not be in council, treaty, or any act, in which any thing shall be imagined against him or the Church of Rome, their rights, seats, honours, or powers; and if I know any such to be moved or compassed, I shall resist it to my power; and as soon as I can, I shall advertize him, or such as may give him knowledge. The rules of the holy Fathers, the decrees, ordinances, sentences, dispositions, reservations, provisions, and commandments apostolic, to my power I shall keep, and cause to be kept of others. *Heretics, schismatics, and rebels to our holy father and his successors, I shall resist and persecute to my power.* I shall come to the synod when I am called, except I be letted by a canonical impediment. The thresholds of the apostles I shall visit yearly, personally or by my deputy. I shall not alienate or sell my possessions, without the Pope’s counsel: So help me God and the holy Evangelists \*.”

\* Vide Burnet’s History of the Reformation, p. 123.

*Oath of a Roman Catholic Priest.*

“The holy Apostolic Romish Church I acknowledge to be the mother and mistress of all churches; and to the Roman Pontiff, successor of St. Peter, Prince of the Apostles, and Vicar of Jesus Christ, I promise and swear true obedience. All doctrines delivered, defined, and declared by the *sacred Canons and General Councils*, and especially by the most holy Council of Trent\*, I receive and profess; and whatever is contrary thereto, and all heresies condemned, rejected, and anathematized by the Church, I equally condemn, reject, and anathematize. This true Catholic faith, out of which there is no salvation, which at present I freely profess and sincerely hold, I do promise, vow, and swear that I will constantly retain and conserve, to my last breath; and, as far as I am able, *I will be careful that it is held by, taught and preached to, my parishioners, or those the care of whom shall belong to me in my function.*”

No. VIII.—(see p. 252.)

It is admitted that the translation of the original text †, which I have consulted, is faithfully given in the Rheims Testament, as published by P. Wogan, Dublin, 1814, and that the word “commanding” (in italics) is also introduced into the Protestant version, not, however, as part of the original text—“but in general, where the words to be understood in the original were evident and certain, they have carefully supplied them in the English version, yet so as at the same time to give notice of the fact‡.” The accu-

\* “Be it known therefore to all men, that the *most holy Canons* are to be exactly and as far as possible *indiscriminately observed by all.*” Sess. 25, cap. 20.

† Κωλυοντων γαμιν, απεχεσθαι ερωματων.

‡ Vide “Christianity a reasonable Service,” p. 55, (printed in Dublin, 1816), by Rev. W. Napper, Curate of Old Ross, diocese of Leighlin and Ferns, Ireland, whose real learning is only to be equalled by his unaffected and genuine piety.

racy of the Rheims translation, *in this instance*, is conceded, —*its letter* has been complied with—a perusal of the following note, taken *verbatim* from the same edition, will best determine how far *its spirit* has been consulted:—"He speaks of the Marcionites, the Eucratites, the Manicheans, and other ancient heretics, who absolutely condemned marriage and the use of all kind of meat, because they pretended that all flesh was from an evil principle; whereas the church of God, so far from condemning marriage, looks upon it as a most holy sacrament, and forbids it to none but such as by a vow hath chosen the better part; and prohibits not the use of any meats whatsoever, in proper times and seasons, though she does not judge all kind of diet proper for days of fasting and penance."

## FINIS.







